No. 206 (New Series). Vol. 4. February 29, 1936

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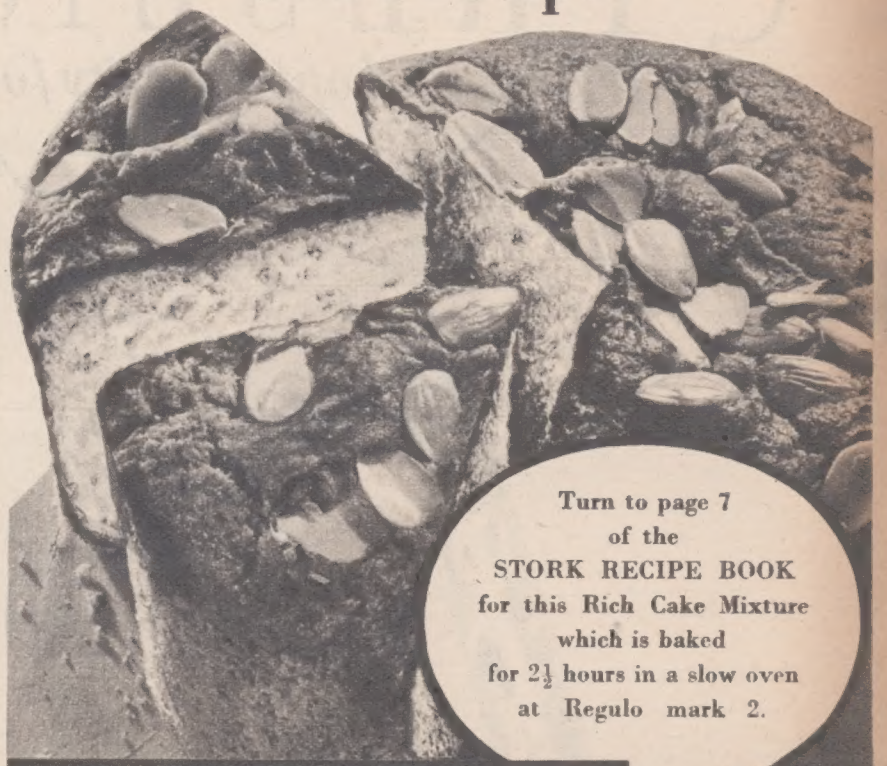

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No. 206. Vol. 4. FEBRUARY 29, 1936
The PASSING SHOW

A noiseless dark shape slipped like a shadow out of the fog. It was a small black cat.

Beautiful, Uncanny Creature

LONG COMPLETE STORY

by

Elizabeth Goudge

ILLUSTRATED BY GAFFRON

WHAT was needed, thought Ivy, as she blackleaded Miss Macallister's sitting-room grate on a cold, foggy Saturday morning in early spring, was a bit of luck. Miss Macallister, who kept lodgings in one of the gloomiest streets in London, never had any, and nor did Ivy, her maid-of-all-work; nor old Mr. Partridge, who did cross-word puzzles on the first floor; nor young Miss Pirbright, who typed on the second floor; and least of all poor Mr. Perkins, who painted in the attic.

They were unfortunate, that was what it was, and through no fault of their own. They were a hard-working and virtuous lot, but all of them, it seemed, born on a wet Friday. Hard, thought Ivy, that facts over which one had no control, such as the day of the week one was born on, could so influence one's fate.

Had she only been born on a fine Sunday she would have had a sylph-like figure, an aureole of golden hair and a dimple; and Bert Norris in the next street, who drove a taxi and made a good thing out of it, might have removed his head from the inside of his defective engine when she passed down the street of an early morning, and said a little more to her than his usual careless, "Fine day, Miss," when it wasn't.

Ivy finished the grate, laid sticks and paper in readiness for the fire that Miss Macallister would have that evening if she felt she could afford it, and getting up from her knees regarded herself in the cracked mirror over the mantelpiece, noting gloomily that she looked more of a Friday's child than ever.

She was short and roundabout and her dark hair was completely and agonisingly straight. Her complexion, owing to life in a back street and a perpetual cold in the head, was not what it might have been and she had lost a front tooth. Only her eyes were arresting, wide-open brown eyes with yellow lights in them, the eyes of an optimist.

Suddenly Ivy laughed, flinging back her head as a young colt does when it takes its first gallop. Her morning pessimism, born of getting up at six o'clock on a bitter cold foggy morning, was always short-lived, and the moment when her natural joy of life suddenly conquered it was a moment of exhilaration for her. As she hurled the grate brushes and the blacklead into a cupboard she was humming "One Night of Love" under her breath a semitone flat, and when she went into the backyard to empty the ashes she was singing it a whole tone flat at the top of her voice.

It was while she was emptying the ashes that the miracle happened. A noiseless dark shape slipped like a shadow out of the fog and inserted itself between Ivy's legs. It was soft as velvet, black as night and mysterious as destiny. . . . It was a small black cat.

"My!" said Ivy, and picked it up.

It was as wet as a drowned rat, its skeleton showed through its fur and it had an ugly ridge round its neck, as though a rope had been tied round it. Yet it was beautiful.

Its face was delicately shaped, its ears were pointed like a fawn's and its eyes were bright green and extremely wicked.

To Ivy the wet fur and the scarred neck told a tale. "Someone's tried to drown you," she said to the cat. "Born on a wet Friday, you were."

The cat purred, closing its eyes and simpering and laying an affectionate paw on Ivy's shoulder. Its head might be, metaphorically speaking, bloody, but it was unbowed, and to show its fighting spirit it suddenly shot out the claws of its affectionate paw and stuck them hard into Ivy.

"Here, none of that!" said Ivy, and slapped it.

The car purred on, its eyes narrowed to wicked green slits and its tail dripping dirty water all down the front of Ivy's clean apron.

But Ivy did not care, for she had suddenly remembered that a black cat brings luck. With eyes like stars she dashed with it into the scullery, where she rubbed it dry with a clean duster and gave it a cod's head left over from yesterday's dinner, the mouse out of the mousetrap and the milk intended for the lodgers' rice puddings.

The cat ate, daintily but with greed, and Ivy watched it, her heart pounding with excitement.

For she was nothing if not superstitious. She would sooner have died than passed under a ladder without wishing, and if she spilled the salt she threw a pinch over her shoulder without a moment's pause. She searched for strangers in her teacup and knocked on wood so often that the knuckles of her right hand were quite worn. . . . And a black cat! A black cat coming into their backyard entirely on its own initiative! . . . Ivy refilled the saucer and passed a hand lovingly over the damp black back.

At this moment Miss Macallister returned from upstairs, where she had been interviewing the lodgers about their dinners and making her usual daily suggestion of "a nice rice pudding and a few stewed prunes for a change."

"Where did that cat come from?" she demanded sharply, her gaunt figure rigid in horror and her grey eyes fixed and staring behind their steel-rimmed glasses.

"It just walked in, m'm," triumphed Ivy. "It means luck, m'm, luck for us all."

"Is that," asked Miss Macallister, faintly but icily, "the lodgers' milk?"

"Yes, m'm," said Ivy belligerently. "The poor creature's 'alf-starved and it's 'ad the lot."

Miss Macallister was not an unkind woman, indeed she was quite the reverse, harbouring out of sheer pity lodgers who paid their bills erratically and stinting herself rather than Ivy when food was short, but she could not afford cats who imbibed the lodgers' milk.

"Ivy," she said, "take that cat through the yard and shut it out in the street. I won't have it here. I can't afford it."

Ivy glared at her employer and her employer glared at her. Miss Macallister's tall, black-clad

(*Continued on page* 6)

CONTINUING

Beautiful, Uncanny Creature

figure, topped with a chignon of grey hair, seemed made of iron and steel, and Ivy knew she was momentarily beaten. . . . When the old girl turned hard like that there was no doing anything with her. . . . She obediently picked up the cat and marched with it through the yard and out into the back street beyond, closing the yard door behind her with a bang.

Miss Macallister sighed with relief. She had feared one of those battle-royals that she sometimes had with Ivy, battles rendered all the harder for both of them by the fact that they were secretly devoted to each other. . . . But the child was a good child and amenable to reason.

But Ivy was not being quite as good as Miss Macallister thought. Once out in the street, with the yard door banged behind her, she held up the cat by the scruff of its neck and addressed it in language almost fierce in its intensity.

"Now look 'ere," she said, "I'm not going to chuck you out to be drowned, and lose the luck of the 'ole 'ouse along with you, I'm going to keep you." She shook the cat slightly, to give point to her remarks. "I'll keep you but I'll 'ave to keep you 'idden. And you'll 'ave to back me up, mind. No squeaking, now, when the old girl's about, and no walking out of places what I've 'id you in. Is that a bargain, Black Sambo?"

Green eyes and hazel eyes met in an unwinking regard and the bargain was ratified. Ivy removed the bib of her apron, always secured in place by a large steel safety-pin, unfastened her print dress, which opened down the front and was kept together by two pins and a darning needle, and placed Sambo in her bosom. He was very small and when the dress and the voluminous bib were re-pinned over him you could hardly have told, in the dim, foggy light, that he was there at all.

Ivy returned to the kitchen looking as though butter would not melt in her mouth. "Shall I clear the lodgers' breakfasts, m'm?" she inquired sweetly.

"You're a good girl, Ivy," said Miss Macallister and laid her hand, with an unusual gesture of affection, on the girl's shoulder. Ivy responded with one of her quick, warm smiles. She stood like a dancer, half-turned away from Miss Macallister, and looking up over her shoulder, so that her front was hidden. A curious attitude, Miss Macallister thought, but becoming to her.

It always took Ivy a good long while to clear the breakfasts because she had to stop and chat with each of the lodgers in turn. Miss Macallister never complained of the time she took, for she thought it probable that the presence of Ivy acted on the lodgers as it did on her—as a tonic.

"Good morning, Mr. Partridge," said Ivy cheerily, as she entered the first floor front room with her tin tray held well in front of her and the bib of her apron rippling curiously.

Mr. Partridge, his newspaper on the floor beside him, was sitting crouched over his gas fire, his blue-veined old hands held out to its warmth and his dressing-gown draped over his shabby tweed coat to keep the fog away from his lumbago. His bald head looked bonier than ever, Ivy thought, and his straggly grey beard stragglier. He had kept a grocer's shop in his day, but he hadn't done well with it and was thankful now for the old age pension that provided him with rice pudding and prunes and a roof over his head. . . . Though he would have liked something more—the wireless that he longed for, and a few comforts, and the wherewithal to do a good turn to other people now and again.

For years he had been doing the Saturday cross-word puzzle in the *Weekly Chronicle*, which offered fifty pounds to the winner; but there always seemed to be some silly little thing that he got wrong, or else, if he was right for once, he wasn't pulled out first. There was some trick about these things, he felt. It was difficult not to be discouraged.

Ivy halted in astonishment when she saw Mr. Partridge's *Weekly Chronicle* on the floor, for on a Saturday morning she was accustomed to seeing him holding it eagerly in front of his nose and to having shot at her such inane questions as, "Can you think, Ivy, of a word of nine letters for a trousered character in Italian comedy? It ends with an e, Ivy." To which she would reply, never having heard of the word pantalone, "I couldn't say, Mr. Partridge, I'm sure . . . Miss Macallister wants to know, sir, if you'd fancy a nice bit of boiled cod to-day? They're out of tripe."

"Why, Mr. Partridge, sir!" she cried this morning. "Why aren't you doing your cross-word?"

Mr. Partridge shook his head sadly. "It's no good, Ivy," he mourned. "They never pull me out first. There's some trick. I shan't do any more cross-words."

Ivy set her tray down on the table with a bang and planted herself in front of Mr. Partridge on the rag hearth-rug. . . . If the old fellow gave up doing his cross-words she might as well go out and order his hearse for Friday week straight away, and so save trouble later, for they were his one link with life.

"Here, none of that!" she said severely, as she had said to the cat when she slapped it for its good, and picking up the paper and folding it back at the cross-word puzzle she laid it firmly on his knee.

But Mr. Partridge made no effort to take it and it slipped off again.

"My!" said Ivy, "you're in a poor way, you are. . . . Now just you look here."

She removed the safety-pin, the darning needle and the two pins and pulled Sambo out from his hiding place, holding the handful of black fur and the wicked green eyes in front of the astonished old man.

"That walked in this morning," she continued. "Honour bright, it did. Walked straight in. It means luck, Mr. Partridge, luck for us all, so just you get on with that puzzle. Oh, and there'll be no rice pudding to-day, the cat's had the milk, only prunes. Oh, and Mr. Partridge, don't you tell the old girl about Sambo for she told me to throw 'im out and she thinks I 'ave. . . . As if I'd throw away a handful of luck like this! . . . Oh, and Mr. Patridge, any bits of food you could manage to keep back from your meals for 'im, a bloater tail or anything like that, I'd be truly grateful."

Mr. Partridge nodded but he still made no move to pick up his paper. "It's all superstition, Ivy," he said gloomily. "Black cats don't bring luck. I had three black cats at one time and it didn't do me any good. But it's a nice cat," he added, and he stretched out a horny finger and rubbed Sambo behind his beautiful pointed ears.

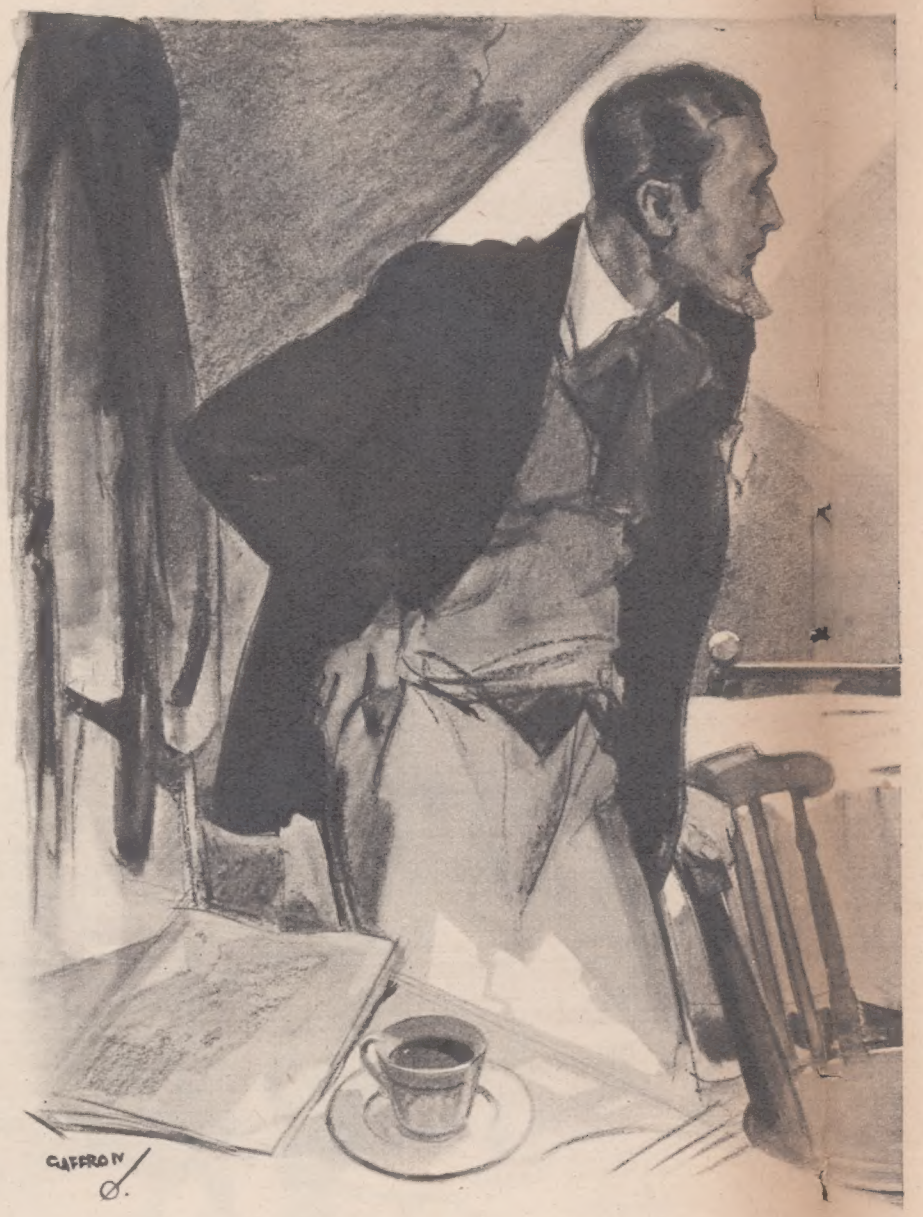
Sambo purred with great suddenness and lifted his delicate chin that he might be rubbed beneath that too. He had under it, hitherto unnoticed by Ivy, a little white spot the size of a threepenny bit. Truly an attractive cat.

When Ivy had gone Mr. Partridge reached absently for his paper. Ivy and Sambo had cheered him up and his unconscious reaction was to do the usual thing. He lifted the paper and adjusted his glasses, looking at it where Ivy had folded it.

"A carnivorous quadruped given to visual activity near the throne and in former times worshipped by the Egyptians."

Mr. Partridge was instantly alert, for this was just the sort of cue that he delighted in, calling as it did for considerable intellectual effort and historical knowledge. "One across. Four letters," he murmured. "I know! Ibis. That's an animal the Egyptians worshipped." He eagerly fetched his dictionary, but the wretched creature turned out to be a kind of stork. By no stretch of imagination could it be called a carnivorous quadruped. Mr. Partridge was cast down, but brightened again. "Got it!" he said. "Lion. A royal animal."

But lion didn't seem to fit, for one down was a disease of nine letters from which infants suffer, and try as he might, Mr. Partridge couldn't think of anything that fitted the case except paralysis. "P," said Mr. Partridge. "Pork, Pony, Pug."



The sudden beam of sun lighted like a pointing finger on Ivy's dress and Sambo's rich black fur.

And then it suddenly came to him. "Puss!" A cat may look at a king, and the Egyptians, a sensible people, had the wisdom to bow the knee to that mysterious, beautiful, aloof, uncanny creature we call a cat.

After that Mr. Partridge found the rest of the puzzle easy. He worked at it all the morning, his mind illumined by a clarity he had not known for years and his eyes alight like those of a child.

Ivy, meanwhile, having removed the bones of Mr. Partridge's haddock to the kitchen, journeyed on to Miss Pirbright's sitting-room on the second floor. Miss Pirbright was a very humble journalist on the staff of a cheap daily paper.

Every afternoon and evening she scurried about London collecting material for the gossip column, and every morning she typed what she hoped were bright snappy little bits calculated to save her from the sack. She was twenty, with curly dark hair and appealing brown eyes, and she would have been pretty had her life not been clouded by anxiety and unrequited love. Fear of the sack had dimmed her eyes and bowed her shoulders, and love for Mr. Perkins in the attic kept her awake at night and made it quite impossible for her to digest Miss Macallister's insufficiently stewed prunes.

Ivy was continually trying to build up her morale by repeating to her the aphorisms that kept Ivy herself going. "Never cross your bridges until you get to 'em," she would say as she emptied the slops, and "Don't worry it may not 'appen," and "There are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it," and "Take no thought for the morrow," and, with an upward jerk of the head towards Mr. Perkins' attic, "Everything comes to 'er what waits." But none of it seemed to do Miss Pirbright any good. She remained hopelessly pessimistic.

This morning Ivy found her dejectedly cleaning her typewriter and so depressed that she did not even look up until Ivy hung Sambo round her neck from behind, after the style of a feather boa, when

she screamed and leapt to her feet and then, seeing what it was that draped her shoulders and stuck pins into her, cried out in ecstasy, "A black cat! Ivy! A black cat!"

"Luck," said Ivy, and Sambo, his head against Miss Pirbright's left ear, purred loudly.

But at this Miss Pirbright shook her head. "That's only superstition, Ivy," she said as she rubbed her cheek against Sambo's soft fur.

"Is it!" said Ivy. "You wait. . . . And will you please keep bits of your bloaters and 'addocks for 'im? And will you please not tell Miss Macallister that 'e is resident in the 'ouse?"

Miss Pirbright promised and Ivy, having re-pinned Sambo and removed the remains of Miss Pirbright's breakfast, departed.

But Miss Pirbright did not immediately return to the cleaning of her typewriter; instead, she pulled a suitcase out from under her bed and abstracted from it a bundle of typescript tied up in brown paper. It was a novel she had written and a fortnight ago, when it had come home to roost with its sixth rejection slip, she had vowed she would never send it out again.

But this morning, somehow, she felt differently about it. She could still feel the soft touch of fur on her neck and hear a cheerful humming in her ear and it made her feel different. Sitting back on her heels on the floor she flicked over a few pages, reading bits here and there, and the book seemed to her a good deal less bad than it had done the last time she dipped into it.

"At least it's better than most of the rubbish they publish nowadays," said Miss Pirbright to herself. "I'll send it out once more. Just once more." She was not, of course, she told herself, in the least influenced by Ivy's nonsense about a black cat bringing luck, it was just that she felt unaccountably cheered up and hopeful.

She fetched paper and string, packed it up and addressed it to the seventh publisher, and hurried out with it at once to the nearest post office, without giving herself time to change her mind. When she came back again she had colour in her cheeks and a sparkle in her eyes, after her run in the cold air, and when she began her typing there was some magic in her fingers that made the sound of the little tapping hammers sound more like gnomes jubilantly step-dancing on a crystal floor than the tin bucket falling downstairs to which Mr. Perkins upstairs usually irritably compared it.

He was more irritable than ever when Ivy entered to remove the dried haddock—and the haddocks meted out by Miss Macallister to lodgers who didn't pay their bills were always very dry indeed—that he hadn't even touched it.

"I can't, Ivy," he said, indicating it with the stem of his pipe. "I can't get the damn thing down. I tell you it is not fit for human food. It is blotting-paper coated with glue."

"Go on," said Ivy. "Don't talk nonsense. If you can't fancy good food, I know who can," and she unpinned her front.

Instantly a delicately curved black shape executed a graceful pirouette in the air and landed on the haddock. With amazing rapidity it absorbed the haddock and presently nothing was left on the dish but a network of bones clean and dainty as a spider's web.

Mr. Perkins threw back his head and laughed, the first genuine laugh he had perpetrated for more than a month. Then he picked up Sambo by his scruff and looked at him. Sambo looked back out of his unblinking green eyes, carefully wiping his whiskers with his tongue as he did so.

"Luck," said Ivy firmly. "Luck for you, Mr. Perkins."

"Likely!" ejaculated Mr. Perkins, and dropping Sambo with heartless suddenness, he swung savagely round and glared at the cold, unlit gas fire. It was one of those irritating shilling-in-the-slot things and had just died on him. He hadn't another shilling.

He was twenty-six, with a tall, lanky figure, a fair pointed beard, a brown velveteen jacket and a blue bow tie with flowing ends that had matched his eyes when it was new but didn't now that he had spilled a good deal of egg over it. Miss Pirbright thought he looked extraordinarily artistic and distinguished, but Ivy, though she liked him, thought he looked a perfect idiot. Miss Pirbright always named him "Adonis" in her thoughts and Ivy "the attic." He painted pictures of which it was impossible to say whether they were right way up or wrong way up; but they were very clever; though for the most part unbought.

That very morning Mr. Perkins had come to the conclusion that he would paint no more pictures. The little attic with a north light beyond his bed-sitting-room, that he used for a studio, was already almost entirely blocked by canvases. Of what use, he had asked himself, to block the room entirely up so that he couldn't even move in it? And of what use to produce scores of masterpieces for which the world, as devoid of taste as of common sense in this twentieth century, had no use? Before Ivy brought his breakfast up he had practically decided to take to the road and become a tramp, and the sight of the everlasting breakfast haddock and the thought of the everlasting prunes and rice that would in due course follow had decided him. If one slept at a different workhouse each night there was bound to be a certain amount of variety in the menus.

"I shall chuck painting, Ivy," he announced swinging round. "I have painted my last picture. I shall——"

And then he stopped dead, his jaw dropping and his eyes widening, transfixed by the picture he saw in front of him.

A sudden gleam of sun had conquered the fog and was lighting up Ivy where she stood with Sambo in her arms, her chin resting on the top of his head. It did not spare the blemishes of either of them; the pimples on Ivy's sallow skin were very noticeable, and her work-reddened hands, and the ugly bones that showed through Sambo's fur and his scarred neck; but it also illuminated their beauties in a rather startling way.

Ivy's eyes, fixed thoughtfully on Mr. Perkins and alight with tolerant amusement, were just the colour of a certain stream that he knew, one of those brown New Forest streams where the water is so sparkling and clear that every pebble below is shown shining like a jewel, as deliciously visible as were the thoughts behind Ivy's eyes—her honest, courageous, kindly thoughts. Her broad, ugly mouth was lifted a little at each corner and her lips were just parted, as though a laugh had laid a hand upon the latch and was just about to walk in.

"And lips, oh you the doors of breath," murmured Mr. Perkins to himself, but he did not say it aloud because quotations from the poets annoyed Ivy and he did not want to disturb the exquisite laughing tenderness of her expression.

And Sambo. Under her chin his triangular face had the velvety softness of a pansy and his great eyes were alight with the pagan fire of his race. His ears, shaped like flower petals, tapering to almost invisible points and cheekily cocked, were exquisite, and the paws hanging over Ivy's wrist were in repose deliciously rounded.

And the picture was not devoid of colour. The sudden beam of sun lighted like a pointing finger on Ivy's blue print dress and Sambo's rich black fur against her white apron. It lit golden lights in Ivy's brown eyes and turned Sambo's to blazing emeralds. It even laid a caressing hand on Ivy's ugly hair and illumined Sambo's whiskers so that they showed like horizontal threads of silver.

Mr. Perkins looked long and earnestly and then dashed into his studio and slammed the door.

"He's dotty," declared Ivy, and cleared away his breakfast.

In his studio Mr. Perkins set up a fresh canvas on his easel, squeezed paint on to his palette with feverish haste and began. Later, of course, he would have to get Ivy and Sambo to sit for him, but at once, while it was fresh in his mind, he must get down the chief notes of colour; the blue and sharp black and white, the gold and green and silver. And above all he must get while he remembered it the look in Ivy's eyes and the laugh knocking at her lips, and the cat's look of poised, attentive naughtiness.

As he worked he became conscious of a delightful tapping sound. He was too busy to identify it, but he found himself thinking of such delightful things as a spring shower falling on shiny beech leaves and a woodpecker tapping on the bark of a walnut tree. His thoughts were not without effect on his painting. The gaiety of the spring crept into it, and the cleanliness of the falling rain. And he was aware, too, of a sense of clarity that came to him from somewhere beyond the tapping sound and that seemed to pervade the house, as though its atmosphere had freshened. That also affected his work and gave it a certain simplicity, so that by lunch time the least artistic observer would have been able to say which way up the picture was intended to be looked at.

One o'clock struck.

Miss Pirbright lifted her cramped fingers from her typewriter and gave a little laugh. She actually was looking forward to a dinner of boiled cod and stewed prunes.

Could it be one already, thought old Mr. Partridge. The morning had flown. Well, he could swear that he had done an extraordinarily difficult cross-word absolutely correctly and yet his mind was quite unexhausted; that wonderful clearness of brain was with him still. And there was Ivy coming up the stairs with that delicious cod.

Mr. Perkins, though he distinctly heard his cod dumped on the table in the next room, took no notice. He painted on and on.

On an afternoon a few weeks later Mr. Perkins stood waiting in the library of a house in the West End. He was clutching his dilapidated green felt hat in his hands and remembering that he ought to have left it in the hall. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead, for he was both tired and hot after

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CONTINUING *Beautiful, Uncanny Creature*

walking so many miles carrying his picture of Ivy and Sambo under his arm. It stood against a chair near him, in the very lovely frame that had been paid for by old Mr. Partridge out of the money he had most astonishingly won for the correct solution of a cross-word puzzle, pulled out first.

All round him, reaching apparently to infinity, stretched the beauty of the library—its soft pile carpet and velvet curtains, its thousand books, its furniture and chairs and priceless pictures.

It was these last that had unnerved poor Mr. Perkins. How had he dared to bring his paltry little picture to the house of a man who owned masterpieces like these? How would he, when that man opened the door and walked in, dare to ask him to buy it? He reminded himself that Conrad Myers, a noted patron of the arts, was particularly fond of modern pictures and that many of his fellow-artists of the modern school had succeeded in selling their work to him. But that did not cheer him up much, for he was not one of his fellow-artists, he was himself, and never before had he so humiliated that self as to beg from a private individual in this way. In the past he had sold his work to dealers or not at all. It had been mostly not at all, but at least he had kept his self-respect.

It was that confounded black cat, he told himself, who had fooled him. Ivy's ridiculous faith in the luck it was bringing them all had influenced him in spite of himself, so that he had really thought his picture a little masterpiece, worthy of being offered to Conrad Myers.

The door opened and that worthy came in, a tall man whose tight-lipped face was without kindness, and at sight of him any sense that might previously have been left in Mr. Perkins' head immediately left it.

Isolated sentences of their conversation seemed to come to him from a long way off as he and Conrad Myers backed away from the picture to see its general effect, drew nearer to it to see its detail, gambled sideways to get the light on it and in circles to test its general merit.

"No," said the great man. "Old fashioned. I am an admirer of modern work. Whoever told you to bring that rubbish to me?"

"But I *am* a modern," gasped Mr. Perkins, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand.

"Modern?" said Mr. Myers. "That?"

Mr. Perkins looked at his picture again and realised with a shock of surprise that the criticism was a true one. It *was* old fashioned. For the first time he saw it as it really was and the sight appalled him. It might, he thought savagely, have appeared upon the outside of one of the Christmas numbers.

He had painted it as a child paints, laying on bright colours lavishly and gaily, all his carefully acquired theories on the subject of composition, restraint and colour value apparently scattered to the winds. And moreover it was painfully obvious; you could tell what the subject was a mile off. And it was sentimental; a poor girl with a cat in her arms, her motherly face against its fur. . . . What could be worse?

Like one in a dream Mr. Perkins suffered himself to be told what Mr. Myers thought of him, to be handed over to a pompous ass of a butler, to be placed in a taxi with his wretched picture and dismissed from the West End in deserved contumely. . . . And this was his expected luck!

It was only when the taxi had turned several corners that he realised he had no money to pay for it. "Hi!" he yelled, and rapped on the glass.

The taxi came to rest in the gutter and a nice young driver with cheerful red hair came round to him.

"Yes, sir?"

"I was trying to sell a picture at that house, and the fool of a butler called a taxi for me that I can't afford. I haven't a bean. I'm awfully sorry. You must let me get out."

The young taxi driver took it well. "Right you are, sir," he said genially and opened the door, revealing the picture. "'Ere!" he ejaculated suddenly, forgetting his manners. "If that 'ain't Ivy Baker!"

"It is," said Mr. Perkins. "Have you the good fortune to know the lady?"

"I live in the next street," said the driver in a burst of confidence. "Bert Norris my name is. Yes, I know Ivy. Whatever made you paint 'er? She's no beauty."

"Oh, isn't she?" said Mr. Perkins. "You look again."

Bert looked again. The spring sunshine fell upon Ivy, doing full justice to her eyes and her laughing mouth and the tenderly, motherly expression that could not fail to move one who, like Bert, had not had the springs of sentiment dried up in him by modern thought. "She ain't a bad girl," he said reflectively, scratching his jaw.

"She ain't," said Mr. Perkins. "There are few women in this world to touch Ivy. She is a remarkable woman. I lodge in the house where she works and I know."

"Pity you couldn't sell the picture," said Bert.

"I didn't deserve to," said Mr. Perkins. "It's a good likeness of Ivy but it's a rotten bad picture. It's the sort of rubbish they put in the Academy."

"'Ave yer tried the Academy?" inquired Bert.

"What?" gasped Mr. Perkins.

"They're judgin' pictures for the spring show now," said Bert. "I've been all the morning carting artistic blokes there with their pictures and all of 'em was a lot worse than what yours is. . . . I'll drive you round there now and you can pay me at your convenience."

For a minute or two Mr. Perkins, still sitting in the taxi, thought hard. For years he had considered the Academy infinitely beneath him—but yet—if a picture exhibited in it attracted attention orders came thick and fast. And of course if men such as himself, with really advanced and intellectual ideas about art, could once succeed in getting into the Academy, that institution would be very greatly benefited.

He sat back in his seat. "Drive on, Bert," he said.

It was two days after Mr. Perkins' picture had been accepted for the Academy that Miss Macallister gave a tea party to her lodgers. She had never done such a thing before, but such wonderful things had been happening to them all lately that she felt they really ought to have a little celebration.

To begin with, there was old Mr. Partridge winning fifty pounds for a cross-word puzzle. It had made a new man of him, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the wireless he had bought had made a new man of him. He loved it as a lover his lady. He listened to it all day and as much of the night as the B.B.C. would permit, driving the rest of the house distracted with the noise he made, and his horizons had widened to take in the whole world.

And he had not forgotten other people in his good fortune. Besides the frame for the famous picture, he had purchased presents for everyone else in the house, and very well-chosen and appropriate presents too . . . Miss Macallister smoothed her purple silk scarf lovingly. . . . And he had paid up all the money owing to Miss Macallister from all of them.

And then there was Miss Pirbright's novel, which had been accepted by a well-known publisher. Miss Pirbright had made no money out of it as yet, but she seemed to have no doubt that she would. Personally Miss Macallister had her doubts, though she didn't say so, but after all what really mattered to Miss Pirbright's happiness was not money that might or might not be forthcoming, but the fact that Mr. Perkins had actually noticed her at last.

He had been absolutely astounded that she should have had the intelligence to write a novel and, what was more, for after all lots of women wrote unsaleable novels, have it accepted. On the strength of it he asked her to tea in his attic and found she was quite pretty enough to take notice of. And the more he noticed her the prettier she got. And the prettier she got the more he noticed her. . . . Nothing could have been more satisfactory.

And it was the same with Ivy and Bert. Mr. Perkins' considered opinion that Ivy was a remarkable woman had not been without influence. Bert now escorted her to the pictures weekly, refreshing her with chocolate creams meanwhile, and Ivy was growing quite fat.

With all this young love about the place Miss Macallister couldn't help feeling a little lonely. It had made her feel more lonely than ever, and a little hurt, that Mr. Perkins had not showed her his picture before he took it to the Academy. She knew it was a portrait of Ivy but that was all she knew, and after all Ivy was her maid so surely she had a right to see the picture. He had showed it to the others but not to her. That, she thought, definitely placed her in the category of old maids who are not wanted.

She couldn't help wishing that she had not, for reasons of economy, turned out that black cat. It would have been something to love. . . . And as things had turned out, with Mr. Partridge paying up all the money owing, she could quite well have afforded to indulge herself. Well, it just showed that there was nothing in the saying that to turn away a black cat is to turn away luck, for she had turned one away and just look at the good fortune that had come to the house.

At this moment Ivy entered with the tea tray and a grand sugar cake.

"I wish, Ivy," said Miss Macallister, "that I had not turned away that black cat. I have it on my conscience."

"It's a funny thing, m'm," said Ivy, "but I often see that cat out in the street beyond the yard. Poor little thing! It looks as though it wanted a good 'ome."

"Ivy!" cried Miss Macallister. "Run out and see if it is there now. If it is bring it in."

Ivy ran, going rather unaccountably upstairs to fetch something first, and returning in an astonishingly short space of time with an armful of black fur which she dumped on Miss Macallister's lap.

"The beauty!" cried Miss Macallister, stroking and petting. "The beauty! But how fat he's got, Ivy, since I saw him last."

"It's just his thick fur," explained Ivy, laying the tea. "When you saw him last he was wet."

"See how he likes me, Ivy," said Miss Macallister, as Sambo, playing up and purring loudly, revolved on her lap, kneading her with his paws so as to make of her a satisfactory surface on which to repose.

He was comfortably settled when the guests arrived. He showed no signs of recognition, indeed, he stared at them with the greatest insolence, quite as though he and the remains of their bloaters and haddocks had never been acquainted, and they, on receiving winks from Ivy, were overcome with astonishment at finding a cat at Miss Macallister's.

"Yes," she said with dignity. "I have decided to keep a cat. Now, Pharaoh, say how-do-you-do to the lady and gentlemen."

"Pharaoh?" faltered Miss Pirbright.

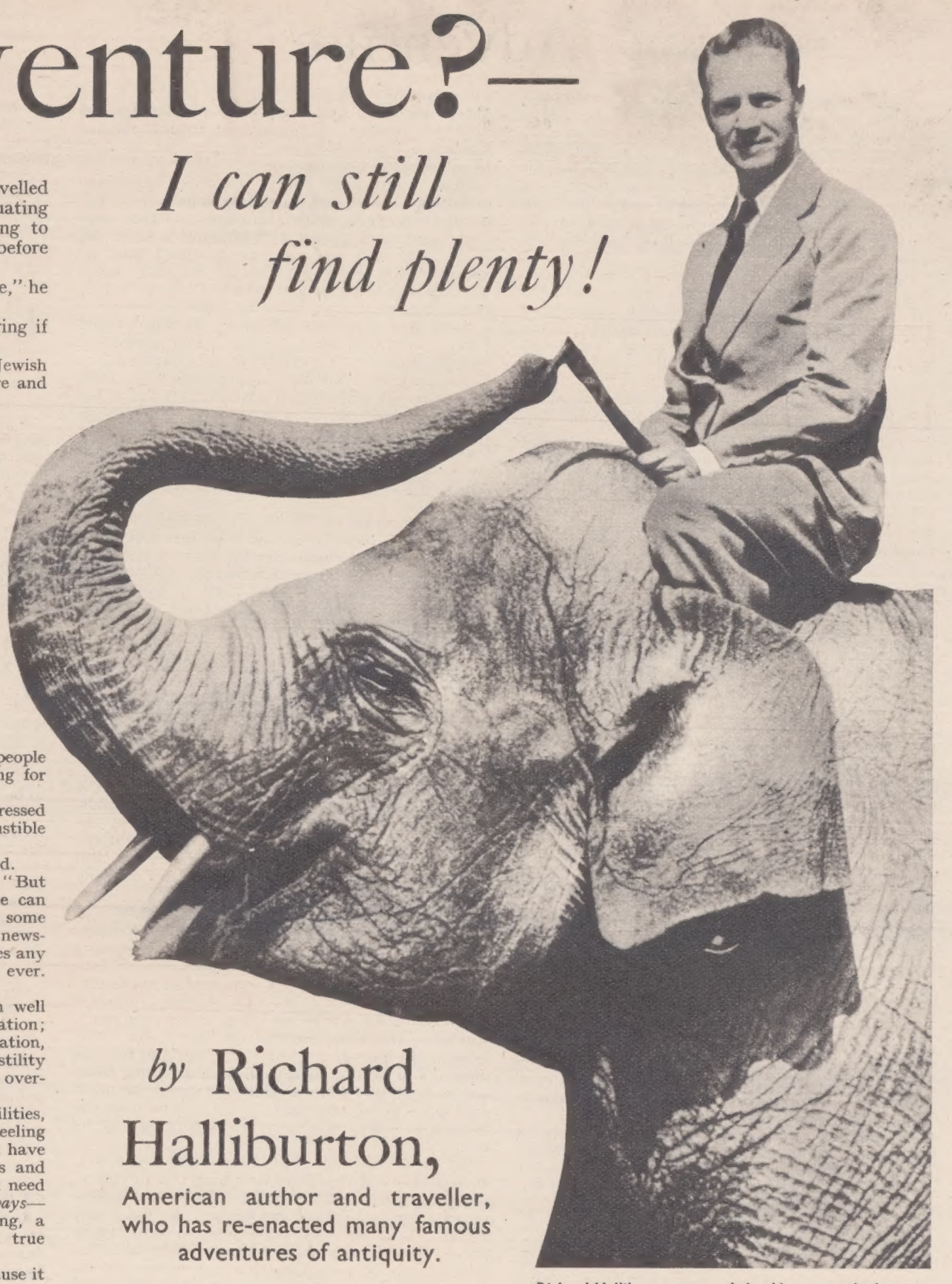
"Yes," said Miss Macallister. "An Egyptian title. A royal title. Cats, if you remember, were worshipped in ancient Egypt."

Mr. Partridge, Miss Pirbright, Mr. Perkins and Ivy all fell upon their knees.

Royally enthroned Pharaoh turned his head slowly from side to side, his wicked green eyes wide, his pointed ears pricked, his pansy face bland and his claws in. Very graciously he purred encouragement while they, like the Egyptians of old, did homage.

Adventure?—

I can still find plenty!



by Richard Halliburton,

American author and traveller, who has re-enacted many famous adventures of antiquity.

Richard Halliburton crossed the Alps on an elephant—thereby emulating Hannibal more than 2,000 years ago.

RECENTLY, I asked a much-travelled young friend of mine, just graduating from college, if he were not going to take a grand tour of the world before facing the business career awaiting him.

"I'm not interested in travelling any more," he said, "there's no place to go."

"No place to go!" I exclaimed, wondering if this were meant to be a comic remark.

"Well, where?" he insisted. "I have a Jewish nose, so Germany is out. England gets more and more drab. I resent the way France robs and insults her American visitors. Spain has become grotesquely and unbearably modern. Egypt was the place to visit—in 1908. Majorca was smart last year, but there's a frantic exodus from it this. Bali is flooded with conducted tourists. I hear Monte Carlo has been turned into a skating rink. One can travel in Russia only when surrounded by the most irritating restrictions, and the South Seas have degenerated into a parody of themselves. So I've decided to take my grand tour around the golf links here at home."

He had not yet finished with his outburst.

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "the thought of ever taking another trip must bore *you* even worse than it bores me. I've had a world cruise, and at one time or another I've been to all the places people go. But you—you haven't stopped travelling for ten years. All you can do now is repeat."

I insisted that every journey I made only impressed me anew with the boundlessness and inexhaustible variety of the world.

But my travel-weary friend was unconvinced.

"Oh, I know it's *big* enough," he argued. "But what of it. There's no place left where one can expect a really new adventure. Try to name some spot you haven't seen over and over in the newsreels. There are no remote, romantic countries any more. And the usual places are duller than ever. No, travel has lost all interest for me."

No place to go! Here was a young man well provided with money, leisure, and sophistication; but certainly lacking in geographical imagination, for never in history, despite international hostility and depression, has the world been so wide, so overflowing with fresh opportunities for travel.

And as for the lack of new adventure possibilities, he's all wrong there, too. If he had more of a feeling for adventure he would realise that it doesn't have to be dramatic or heroic, discovering oceans and escaping from head-hunters. It doesn't even need be important. If only you *remember it always*—perhaps a trifling incident, a casual meeting, a glimpse of strangeness or beauty—it is a true adventure.

The first place that comes to my mind, because it is so famous—and so unfamiliar—is Timbuctoo. Despite the legendary aura that surrounds it, Timbuctoo is real and accessible to the outside world. True, one must cross the Sahara Desert by 'plane or lorry, eighteen hundred miles from the Atlas Mountains to the Niger River, to get there; but in my opinion, that adds more interest than difficulty.

Certainly, the goal is worth the effort. No other spot on earth is remotely like Timbuctoo—once, in the prosperous days of slavery, a great mud metropolis set in sand; and even now, in its decrepitude, still a city from another world.

I first saw Timbuctoo from the cockpit of my Flying Carpet, ten thousand feet above. It looked like a huge grey disk lying lost in the desert, round, flat, with close-packed houses.

When I had spiralled down to within five hundred feet of the ground, a most extraordinary thing happened. From the housetops so many storks rose up, agitated by the roaring motor, that they almost blotted out the town. The Flying Carpet had to retreat precipitously from this myriad of long-legged birds and approach the make-shift landing field by a circuitous route.

I spent a fortnight exploring this curious city. By day I wandered past its great mud towers, among its ten thousand white-robed, black-skinned inhabitants. By night, in the clear desert starlight, I drifted through the deep-sanded lanes, listening to the rhythmic beating of the savage drums and the clap-clap-clap of hands.

And all night long I heard the bats, a hundred times more numerous than the storks, squeaking and whirring overhead, and rising in clouds from the ancient mosques. The bats and the storks, the storks and the bats, these symbols of birth and death, are the real owners of Timbuctoo.

For the traveller looking for unusual adventure, this strange town offers a rich field. For example, it's still one of the best places to buy negro slaves. Since slave traffic is strictly forbidden by the French officials, the purchase is all the more adventurous. "Prohibition" doesn't work there any better than it did in America. The Arab dealers dare to come right to the market place, leading their half-disguised merchandise, and with bootlegger furtiveness exchange the slave for gold.

Although the entire white population numbered less than thirty, I found the social life of Timbuctoo not without interest. At the time of my visit, there was only one white girl in town—the eighteen-year-old daughter of a French petty official.

On first thought one might have sighed over her imprisonment in this savage town—but not on second thought, for there were twelve young, unmarried, high-spirited French army officers competing for her hand. The battle was terrific—and never, she wisely arranged, decisive. Here was one rose whose sweetness was not being wasted on the desert air. Mlle. Susie encouraged them all, and had herself just about the gayest time of any *jeune fille* in Africa.

Books could be—and have been—written about Timbuctoo. But the many interests to be found there will not be there long. It is a fast-fading town. More modern colonial centres in that part of Africa are rapidly stripping it of its trade and population. Consequently, if one hopes to find something more than a stork-and-bat-infested shell, one had best go soon.

Ten years ago it took forty days to reach Timbuctoo by river canoe, from St. Louis on the west coast of Africa, and over twice that long to come across the Sahara by camel caravan from the north. But now one can fly there comfortably from Algiers in eighteen flying hours, or take the regular desert motor lorry transport which requires a week.

P.S.—If you go there, give my love to Susie.

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Continuing Adventure?

While we're in Africa, I'd like to recommend another town where travellers seeking to escape conformity might go. It's Fez. Only quite recently has Fez been discovered. How it was overlooked for so long by the tourist flood I cannot imagine, for it possesses a savage and passionate charm to a greater degree than I've found in any other Arab city. All the colour and all the drama of the Arabian Nights still flow through its tenth-century streets.

Here, the Baghdad of our story books still lives. Baghdad itself has lost nearly all of its original Arab personality. Cairo is entirely modern, Algiers and Tunis little less so. But Fez is as untamed as in the days when its fierce, fanatical people conquered Spain and threatened France itself.

Fortunately for Fez, its streets are so narrow and crooked that Progress and its army of the light are held at bay. There is not a single automobile within the walls. To see a movie, one must go five miles away to the new French settlement. In place of tram cars, the public squares are filled with story tellers and their rapt audiences, with snake-charmers, with troops of acrobats, with barbaric dancers dancing to barbaric drums.

Perhaps one reason I remember Fez with such enthusiasm was the stroke of good luck I had in being there with my Flying Carpet when the French Army put on the first flying meet the town had ever seen. The meet had been widely heralded for weeks in advance throughout Morocco, and dozens of tribal chiefs with their retinues had come from the valleys of the Atlas Mountains and from oases in the Sahara.

No circus parade was ever as flamboyant, as extravagant, as the gallery that lined up on four sides of the field. The chiefs vied with each other in the richness of their costumes. They brought their whitest horses and finest camels, and these were tethered close to the front in order that they, too, might behold the miracle of flying.

Several companies of Foreign Legionnaires with all their brilliant banners, and a hundred-piece band uniformed in scarlet, occupied one section beside the French general's canopied box. The Spahi native calvary, that picked body of Moorish horsemen, all dressed in pure white, sat gracefully on their magnificent mounts.

Tirailleurs in khaki, Zouaves in red breeches, black Senegalese in horizon blue, Goumier native police of gigantic stature, all mingled with the ten thousand white-gowned Moroccans. Swords and spears and bayonets caught the hot sunshine. Great sections and splotches of colour were splashed up and down the field. I can't imagine there ever having been before such a combination of barbaric spirit and military splendour.

Fortunately for me, my Flying Carpet was as colourful as the gallery—gold wings and tail, black cowling, and scarlet body. Also because of special construction and smaller size, it could out-stunt the more ponderous French war 'planes.

While the stunt-flying which Moye Stephens, my pilot-companion, put us through, would not have been remarkable in air-minded America, it caused unbelievable excitement among these wild-riding, wild-fighting Moors. The moment our 'plane came to earth, they forgot all about order, broke through the lines, and rushed across the field to inspect the crazy Flying Carpet—chiefs, body-guards, Spahis, Goumiers, native civilians, horses, camels, and dogs.

But it by no means put an end to the show. For the arrogant Spahi cavalry, accustomed to admiration, like show-off children, couldn't bear to see the honours going to somebody else, even at an air-meet. A hundred of them, determined to demonstrate their own native valour and outshine the foreigners, drove my aeroplane and the crowds collected around it from the field and then lined up on their white stallions and put on a "fantasia" which struck me as being as exciting as our stunt-flying had struck them.

At a signal, the hundred riders drove spurs into their mounts and came charging down the field. This reckless group-riding is the national sport, the release, the joyous passion of the Moroccans. And never was it performed with more abandon than on that day, for the Spahis felt that their glory was in danger of usurpation by a gold and scarlet aeroplane.

Yelling like demons, this terrifying wave of riders thundered toward us. The saddles and bridles were made of bright-hued leather studded with gold. The burnouses, lined with red and purple silk, streamed backward on the whirlwind. In unison and at breakneck speed the hundred riders fired their muskets, in unison flung them in the air, reached up to seize them, and plunged on in a frenzy of colour and ferocity.

Other waves were ready to follow, each wave executing a new and intricate manœuvre. The horses themselves, seeming to know that they were being applauded, reared with impatience to be off, or on command stopped their headlong pace so abruptly that they slid forward on their hind-quarters with their forelegs stretched out stiff before them.

After that exhibition of riding, all Stevens and I could remember about our own little contribution was the magnificent spectacle it had provoked.

The next place I'd like to suggest as being fresh and unspoiled, and offering adventure, is one of the most celebrated but least appreciated countries on the globe. It's Greece. I fully realise that a dozen tourist steamers each winter pour hundreds of passengers into Athens for one brief afternoon. But Athens will not reveal herself in one hour, nor Greece in one day.

I once spent twelve months wandering and studying within its boundaries, and even then felt I had read only the introduction to the vast encyclopedia of knowledge and culture that Greece represents.

Outside Athens, anybody with a feeling for adventure can find it in abundance. A hiking enthusiast would enjoy the twenty-six-mile walk to Athens from Marathon, along the same path Phidippides ran in 490 B.C. bearing the news of Greek victory over the Persians. I tried to run the course, but was defeated by a violent thirst and an over-draught of local wine so potent that it forced me to abandon my Marathon run halfway home and take to a taxicab.

Farther north, for mountain climbers, there is Mount Olympus, the home of the Greek gods. Besides being the most famous mountain in the world throughout all history, it is also one of the most beautiful. Its slopes are still wooded and still inhabited by shepherds wearing curls and carrying crooks as in the classic times.

These shepherds still insist that nymphs and satyrs can be seen on summer nights upon the slopes, and that in spring the harp of Orpheus, enchanting all nature with his music, can be heard.

The summit of Olympus—the central rock-spire called the Throne of Zeus—has not been attained a dozen times, for it is by no means easily conquered. But to an ambitious mountaineer, this should make as romantic and novel a climb as mountains have to offer. You won't find Zeus and Venus living there any more, but if you are willing to spend the night on top, as I did, the vision of the sunrise over the Aegean is worth whatever discomfort has to be endured.

For swimmers, there is, of course, the Hellespont, though this feat is rapidly becoming commonplace. However, even if this swim should be made compulsory for high-school graduation, it would still remain one of the most appealing and most classic of adventures. The water of the Hellespont is too unbelievably blue, and its shores, however barren, too crowded with the spirits of immortals from ancient history, ever to lose its fascination.

In 1925, with considerable difficulty because of the notorious current, I managed to swim across from Hero's tower in Europe to Leander's home port in Asia. The idea was completely new then, as no one had thought to do it since Byron's swim in 1818. And I derived considerable elation in re-living the classic story—short, that is, of the famous *dénouement* in which Leander drowned.

But this rather laborious endurance test did not compare, in real pleasure offered, to another swim I enjoyed in the harbour of Piraeus, the port of Athens.

One morning, having found a sparsely wooded promontory jutting into the bay and strewn with the huge drums of prostrate marble columns, I was about to swim out from shore when a deaf and dumb fisherboy in a rowboy came up to me and explained, with elaborate gestures, that if I would climb into his boat he would direct me to something interesting. Puzzled, I complied. He rowed me out about a thousand feet to a particular spot he had in mind, and then, having anchored above it, pointed to something on the floor of the bay.

There, through the brilliant water, I saw gleaming in the filtered sunshine, an ancient marble bathtub, half buried in the sand—and *such* a bathtub. Eight feet long, five wide, and five deep; made of perfect slabs of flawless Pentelic marble, richly carved and bound together by bronze clamps.

I jumped overboard and swam down into this de luxe little pool. Its white marble sides seemed only to have been brightened by the scrubbing of two thousand years of waves. Clean and bright as the marble, was the gold of the sand in which it rested. And growing on its floor was a bed of bright green moss. Never was there a more beautiful, a more unexpected, bathtub.

Obviously, it had adorned a luxurious seaside garden in ancient times. The sensation of bathing in this priceless two-thousand-year-old submarine tank, filled—and overflowing—with dancing, sun-shot Aegean Sea, so completely caught my fancy that I returned to it many times, feeling I had found an adventure that was more entertaining even than the Hellespont.

My tub is still there, and I'll gladly share its marble spaciousness with anyone who has the good fortune to find it.

And now may I suggest one last country that's almost never visited, but offers the very best reasons to be—Persia?

When, not so long ago, I started eastward in my own aeroplane to fly around the globe, and seek out the countries I had not known before, but especially wanted to know, I lost no time in choosing Persia. From childhood I had read of Alexander the Great's conquest of this fabulous land, but no one I knew had ever been there.

I was familiar with Omar Khayyám and Hafiz, and had seen pictures of the Peacock Throne. But Persia itself, as a real existing country seemed only a dream and a fable.

And so, to investigate this fable, I steered my Flying Carpet from Baghdad straight toward Persia—and returned singing Persia's praises to the skies.

Like Morocco, Persia is completely unspoiled by the machine age. There is not one mile of railroad within its borders. Camel caravans, as in the days of the Magi who came from here, still bear nine-tenths of the commerce, and are still guided by the stars across the wilderness.

These caravans must traverse a country sometimes convulsed by gorges and high mountains. Where there are no mountains there is desert. But in the oases one finds gardens so lush and fruitful that they have inspired the poets down the ages.

The Persians, to a greater degree than any other single race, are poets. Few of them can read or write, but most of them can recite at great length the popular verses of Hafiz. And in Isfahan, with its gardens and orchards, its flower-lined river, its exquisite mosques and palaces, the people *live* poetry.

There is continual music. The troupes of dancers seem never to tire. The Persian wine so praised by Omar Khayyám still flows freely, and the women are still as lovely as he pictured them. Spring in Isfahan is a riot of perfume and nightingales and flowers and singing and love-making.

Nobody works; they live on love and poetry—and opium—and past glories, instead. But there is no self-consciousness, no sense of sin, or fear of idleness. A lute, a jug of wine, and thou (to misquote Omar), and who cares whether Europe and America sink or swim, or whether General Motors goes to four or forty—not the Isfahani!

Timbuctoo, Morocco, Greece, Persia, and a hundred more. How wide, wide, wide is the world to those who are eager to see and to learn; how overflowing with new travel interests waiting to be enjoyed, with or without depression.

Surely, in all the days of history, there never was a time when this earth offered so many perfectly *swell* places to go, as 1936.

Begin Next Week

CONFESSIONS

of a

FASHION KING

by Paul Poiret

Short Short Story

BY

S. L. Bensusan

Illustrated by W. J. Turner

"You can't set in that corner this mornin', Dad," declared Bessie.

MR. DAGG *goes home*

TO Peter Dagg, widower and farm-worker, Time had brought an old age pension while leaving him so sturdy that he could add a few shillings to it by doing odd jobs. His cottage with its three rooms and scullery had been condemned, but he was permitted to remain, since in due season the landlord would obtain public assistance to recondition it and then demand three shillings a week instead of eighteen pence. Peter paid another eighteen pence a week to Widder Tuppet who came up to his cottage every Friday "to set things to rights" and "do a mite o' washin'."

To young Mrs. Dagg, who as a girl had worked for him in the dairy, Farmer Staple, owner of the cottage, made covert suggestion. "Why don't you take old Peter home to yours," he enquired. "You've the room, he's no trouble and the week you get him away I'll lend a cart to take his pieces. And that," he concluded significantly, "will be a couple o' pound in your pocket, Bessie."

Now it chanced that Bessie Dagg had seen in Market Waldron, in the shop of Messrs. Sludge & Sludge, who were holding an end of the season sale, a "costoom" of altogether uncommon fascination. The price had been reduced from eight guineas to forty-five shillings.

"I reckon," said Bessie Dagg to her young, good-humoured and devoted husband, only a few hours later, "we oughter bring y'r father home here," and young Peter flushed with pleasure.

"I'll goo speak to him tomorrer," he said when his wife had told him about the freedom of a farm cart and horse, "I reckon he'll like hisself wunnerful."

Owd Peter's satisfaction was not so clearly marked. He would not consent gladly to leave the cottage in which he had been born. Of old time it had held two other rooms that the years regarded as encumbrances and removed, but he remembered them. It was not only the association, though that was not to be overlooked; he stood in a certain fear of his daughter-in-law who was honest without grace, just without kindness and civil without sympathy.

"I'll sleep on't," declared old Peter and his son went back to prepare the spare bedroom to receive its share of his father's furniture, fully convinced that the offer would not go unaccepted.

He was a sound judge, within a fortnight the farm cart brought Peter Dagg and his household goods which filled the bedroom and would have overflowed on to the ground floor had Mrs. Dagg permitted. The firm fashion in which she consigned the sideboard to the shed reserved for fruit and kindling, chilled the old man who, never having had anything to protest against, had lost the capacity to complain.

Mr. Dagg's high spirits, stimulated by the thought of close association with his only child, suffered a sudden set back. He soon learned to hide himself in the inglenook seat, speaking only when he was spoken to, and Peter Dagg knowing nothing of the cause of his father's dejection, attributed it to the change.

"You can't set in that corner this mornin', Dad," declared Bessie Dagg on the first Tuesday morning following the move, "I gotter turn th' room out." The old man said nothing; he walked up and down the lane, sat in the porch and was disconsolate.

Then again she made him wash before he sat down to tea and if his hair was untidy or his neckerchief was in disarray she would count it to him loudly for unrighteousness. Without being definitely hostile she showed her intolerance of him in subtle ways and he recognised them for what they were.

On fine mornings he would hobble out to the old cottage that had been his home; it was being improved out of recognition. One morning Widder Tuppet came along.

"I feel th' miss o' me job along o' you, Peter," said the old lady. "I can't spent money same as I did."

"What did ye spend it on, Sarah," enquired Mr. Dagg curiously.

"Sweets," replied Widder Tuppet. "I allus had a sweet tooth. Time I wore a little owd gel I'd steal th' sugar. Me mother'd flee me time she caught me, but she dedn't allus. I wore a double cunnin' little faggit, though I sez it. How d'you git along, Peter?"

"Nit no how," confessed Mr. Dagg. "That womankind can't abide me rightly speakin', ne yet me her. Grudges me me mouth an' looks owd fashioned at me if I ain't clent meself twice a day. I'm wholly sorry I bin an' went outer here. That's a wunnerful han'some place they're makin' on't. Forever o' rent that Master Staple'll ast."

"He can't take more'n three shillin'," declared Widder Tuppet, "I made enquiration. If Govinment goo an' turn a owd place inter a new un f'r ye, you gotter let it f'r three shillin's, don't they'll lock ye up sure as harvest. Ruffead towd me. He should say Master Staple bin an' promised it to Bob Nunn. He allus ded favour Bob, he should say he's th' best ploughman hereabouts."

For some reason Peter and Widder Tuppet met again and again outside the cottage. To the former it had stood for home, to the latter for sweets, and they grew to compare notes through the brief winter days.

Mr. Dagg was only too glad of a sympathiser, he would not complain to his son of the pin pricks that were of daily experience, he did not even protest when Mrs. Dagg on no better grounds than ill-will, forbade him to go into the store room to polish the sideboard

"I can't have me place turned inside out," she replied to his plea.

Very unhappy, he sought the home he had left without forethought and found his friend talking to Mr. Bob Nunn, an undersized, semi-circular little man with blue eyes and red cheeks on which a wisp of whisker found an unbecoming home.

"Bob's in a reg'lar caddle," remarked Widder Tuppet; "his wife sez she on't move."

"That's th' true word," explained Mr. Nunn, "she should say she'd liefer goo live in th' workus. This here's too lonesome f'r her; she sez soon as ever I bin an' gone an' went to me wuk, an' th' child'en at school, some tramp'll come along an' cut her throat an' nobody hear her time she hollers out. Master Staple bin up to ours an' towd her how he bin an' got new rooms put on an' a new stove in th' ketchen, but she ouldn't hear on't. She cried wi' one side of her fice an' laughed wi' th' t'other, an' shrikked terr'ble."

"Then that Master Staple sez if she dedn't wanter goo she could same as stay where she wore," concluded Widder Tuppet as though she feared lest the conclusion of the narrative might prove too trying to the ploughman.

"That's it Sarah," agreed Mr. Nunn with obvious relief. "She ouldn't come down this road if that was ever so. But a wunnerful home mind ye f'r three shillin's, an' new paper on th' walls an' fowerty rod o' ground an' fower good rooms an' a scullery that better'n many a ketchen. Well, I mus' be gettin' along."

The old couple saw him turn the corner before proceeding to explore the cottage through the open back door. Two new rooms had given it the aspect of a mansion, bright new paper suggested luxury. A new range in the kitchen, a new copper in the wash house bespoke comfort.

"I reckon Jine Nunn's some hard to please," remarked Mr. Dagg. "Nobody ever come an' cut me wife's throat all th' time she lived here, ne yet mine, time I lived alone."

"Folk don't do sech things," remarked the widow. "I'd live here an' never worrit meself."

"So would I—" began Mr. Dagg and then stopped, his speech arrested by a great idea.

"You gotter owd age pension, Sarah," he remarked.

"Yes," she admitted, "an' me gel Polly what's up in Lunnon bin started sendin' me two shillin's a week since I towd her come Chrismus I bin an' lost you."

"I got me pension," continued Mr. Dagg, "an' Master Staple'll allus gimme five shillin's a week f'r muddlin' round. He ast me that's on'y a fortni't agoo why I hadn't bin up an' I towd him bin I'd come an' do a mite o' hoein' now th' days git longer. If you an' me got merried, Sarah," he went on, "we could p'y three shillin' a week rent an' live like lords."

"Same as lords," replied Widder Tuppet reflectively; "but what'd folk say, Peter?"

"I got me sticks o' furnicher," continued Mr. Dagg unmoved by thought of public opinion, "an' what do we care about folk? It's a respectable thing enough to be chu-ched."

"I'll do ut, Peter," agreed Widder Tuppet, "an' that on't cost ye a ring, bein' th' one I got come on an' off quite easy. Now you better goo fust an' ast Master Staple if he'll accept o' ye f'r th' cottage; don't that on't be no use merryin'."

But Mr. Staple did more than accept Mr. Dagg on a 3/- basis; he promised the loan of a horse and cart to fetch the furniture from each cottage. There were no guests, Mr. Dagg could not leave his work, but Reverend Blazer gave bride and bridegroom a wedding joint, Miss Arabella, the Squire's sister sent a gift of groceries and all went merry as a marriage bell.

"That's as well I never ast Polly," remarked the bride contentedly one evening as she sat by the fire, a paper bag of sweets by her side.

"I wholly wondered," replied the happy husband, "I thought she mighter come along."

"That wouldn't ha' done," explained Mrs. Dagg senior. "If she bin an' known I got settled, she'd ha' reckoned I dedn't want any more money f'r sweets. I'd feel th' miss o' them."

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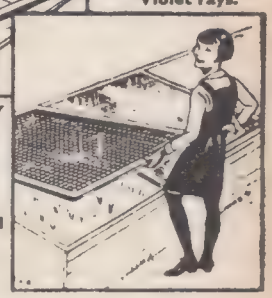

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UP *the* POLE

by John Clement

To learn this dizzy job, the linesman starts (right) with "baby" telegraph poles.

WIND from the north, increasing to a gale. Tall trees, bordering an arterial road that links up cities for hundreds of miles throughout England, are swaying wildly. Above the sough of the wind comes a prolonged cracking sound, and for two miles in each direction a forest of wires thrums and tightens under a great strain.

Somewhere in each of the great cities linked by wires and road telephonists juggle frantically with switches and connections that make no response, and then alarm bells begin to ring in small houses miles apart to awaken and drive an army of experts "up the pole."

The telegraph and telephone services are disorganised by the fall of a tree across the wires, or perhaps the pole itself has fallen. To save what might prove a long search for the scene of trouble, a "test" clerk makes calculations with a set of measuring instruments to decide upon the probable location.

Every pole a North Pole

By the time the "test" clerk is ready to give advice a local brigade of linesmen have been awakened by the alarm bells, and then the rush to restore communication begins.

Like many another important public service, however, the work and life of a linesman are almost unknown to a generation accustomed to take most things for granted.

Yet he is a public servant of first importance, since on him depends the efficiency of the telephone and telegraph services without which modern life would be brought almost to a standstill.

Spring heralds a busy season for linesmen. Not even week-end motorists knock down so many telegraph poles in summer time as the spring and winter gales. A heavy fall of snow, followed by sharp frost, will increase the burden on light wires until they snap. Then it means a climb up the pole in icy weather, at any hour of the day or night, to restore the service.

If the pole is of the "light" type it will be about 35 feet in height. A "medium" pole is about 45 feet and the "heavy" variety are up to 75 feet.

Imagine the linesman's task on a winter's night, out on some lonely moor, climbing to a height of 75 feet and sorting out a maze of wires with frozen fingers! To assist him to identify the wires, each linesman is provided with what is called a "Pole Diagram" book.

There are some 5,000 men engaged regularly on wire and cable work throughout Great Britain, with more than 2,000,000 telegraph poles to inspect and repair. Every year the General Post Office uses about 100,000 new poles, despite the fact that the life of a telegraph pole is anything from thirty to fifty years.

To maintain the telegraph and telephone services effectively, the whole country is divided into thirteen districts, and each of these is sub-divided into sections of four. Each sub-division is in charge of a local post-office engineer, who has about 200 to 300 assistants ready to go "up the pole" or under the ground at a moment's notice.

Apart from sudden calls of an urgent nature, the linesman's daily round is usually one of inspection and the tracing of minor faults. He may go "up the pole" eight to ten times a day, according to the nature of the area worked.

In a densely populated area he can deal with more faults than a man who must cover considerable distances in a rural district. Records are kept of lines to special buildings in each district, and while the average subscriber may wait a few hours for repairs, these have to be carried out immediately in the case of hospitals, fire brigades, police stations, coast-guard stations, and other places of public importance.

In sparsely populated areas the linesman travels by motor-cycle or motor-van to his work. To assist him in what may be a long search, the motor-vans are equipped with a glass roof, so that the linesman can study the overhead wires as the car travels along the road.

When the pole with the fault is located, the linesman uses a set of climbing irons to make his ascent, and a safety belt enables him to use both hands freely at his work.

To provide poles for the 10,000,000 miles of telephone and telegraph communications in the British Isles, the Post Office purchases the entire yield of suitable home-grown timber and, in addition, considerable quantities from abroad.

The Scotch pine provides us with telegraph poles, and although many experiments have been carried out over a course of years with other kinds of timber, as well as with steel tubular shafts, nothing has been found so suitable and enduring for the purpose.

Although every effort is made to meet the demand for new poles from home-grown timber, the supply is quite inadequate and has to be supplemented with importations of Scotch pine from Norway. Scotland produces on an average only about 3,000 poles yearly.

So anxious is the General Post Office to line British highways with home-grown timber, that it grants financial preference to British growers. Any landowner who thinks he has timber suitable for telegraph poles has only to inform the Post Office of the fact to bring an expert down from London, who will gladly make an examination of his trees.

These experts will give free advice on standing timber and visit likely estates in all parts of the country in the hope of obtaining suitable poles. The best poles come from the Scottish Highlands, and tall masts of the "heavy" variety grown there line every British trunk road. Telegraph poles also come from the Spey valley, the Dee valley, and from valleys near Garve, Dundonnel, and as far north as Loch Broom and Strathcarron.

Cheapest—from Scotland

Every year about 2,000,000 cubic feet of wood are treated with preservative to provide telegraph poles. Each tree-trunk is carefully inspected before it is accepted for service, and then classified according to the number of wires and cross-beams it is able to support.

The poles are kiln-dried until every vestige of sap has evaporated and afterwards creosoted. Creosote is now injected in a tank under pressure, so that the preservative penetrates thoroughly. Any excess of creosote is withdrawn from the pole by vacuum. Formerly the poles were merely steeped in creosote, which afterwards oozed out to poison streams and watercress beds, as well as spoil any article of clothing which came in contact with the pole.

Nothing can compare with the wooden poles of Scotland for carrying wires across country, not even steel shafts. For one thing, a steel shaft cannot be climbed so easily and swiftly as a wooden pole, and since the shaft is hollow, it corrodes inside.

Moreover, the corrosion takes place where it cannot be seen and treated, so that the steel shaft is liable to snap without warning. Another point of economic importance is that a telegraph pole impregnated with creosote requires little or no maintenance and repair throughout its long life, whereas a steel shaft must be painted at frequent intervals.

Never feels giddy

While the present policy of the General Post Office is to place wires underground wherever this is possible, there are certain advantages with the overhead system which keep the telegraph pole a permanent feature of our countryside. The telegraph pole is economical in distributing wires to private houses in populated areas, because several subscribers can be accommodated from one distributing pole without the necessity for tearing up private paths attached to a house.

Seventy-five years ago the linesman went aloft in a top hat—in which he carried his tools!

But nowadays the main trunk lines are mostly carried underground; in fact there are 9,000,000 miles of wire underground compared with 1,000,000 miles carried overhead.

It seems that the linesman and his climbing irons will be wanted as long as our present systems of communication remain, and a splendid school exists at Dollis Hill, Middlesex, to train him for his important work. Young men with an ambition for climbing poles to see the world are able to learn their job under ideal conditions. They are taught to repair broken wires on poles no taller than themselves.

These short poles, equipped with cross-beams, insulators, and wires, stand in a long line across part of the school grounds, and apart from them stands a full-size telegraph pole, on which pupils are taught to use their climbing irons.

After a few weeks at Dollis Hill, the recruit is sent out as an assistant to an experienced linesman, and gradually learns the practical side of his job.

So well are these young climbers taught, and so safe is their equipment, that they seldom complain of being giddy at the top of the pole. There are few accidents, and in most cases these have proved to be the result of carelessness.

For all this assurance, however, climbing poles 75 feet high on dark winter nights, with the wind blowing a gale, is not the sort of thing the average man looks for as a hobby—or even as a source of bread and butter.

The WOMAN on my ISLAND

"Murderer!" she breathed. "Why shouldn't I say it? That's what you are."

THE wet driftwood made sizzling sounds as I piled it on the fire. Below us, between the jungle and the sea, the beach lay, with a still, empty gleam. The woman stood looking into the flames, and their yellowish light struck across her face. It was a very pretty face.

"I noticed the ship last night," I said, "just before the moon swung herself out of the sea. What ship was it?"

"The *San Toi*."

"Chinese boat?"

"Yes. I—I bribed Chang Foo, the skipper, to put me ashore here."

"Why?"

She just looked at me, without replying. Probably I returned her stare with an even greater curiosity. I was puzzled, perhaps a little angry, at her coming. What had made her leave the *San Toi*? Why had she picked out *my* island? There are many islands in the White Archipelago, and mine is probably the smallest and loneliest of them all.

From the door of my hut, through a pair of night-glasses, I had watched her come ashore, only a few minutes ago. I had seen her jump almost eagerly from the boat, a small leather-case in her hand, with the two Chinese oarsmen staring at her as if they considered her mad. I had given her food and coffee, with a dash of brandy in it, because there was a certain chilliness in those island nights. On James Island—*my* island, as I call it—I lived pretty well.

I heard her put down the empty cup. There was a rather strained little silence; furtively, through the shadows, we were inspecting each other. Outside, the night blazed. Presently I walked to the door and looked out at it. A moment later I heard her rise also, knew she was standing just behind me, on her toes, staring over my shoulder.

"It's beautiful out there," she said; and there was a sort of ecstasy in the way she said it.

"Maybe," I grunted. "I've got used to it."

"How long have you been here, on this island?"

"Five or six years, now."

"Always—alone?"

"Yes, except when the *American Boy* brings stores and papers and things. Usually, the papers are months old when I get them."

"What makes you live like this?" she asked.

"I've reasons."

I might have told her more, but didn't. Why should I? We had known each other only a few minutes. Besides, one can't tell a woman the brutal truth, like that. Like a shot out of a gun.

"*I murdered my wife, that's why.*" Wouldn't that have scared her?

"You haven't told me your name yet," I said.

Her slender form grew oddly stiff, like a bit of wood. Her hesitation was so obvious.

"Mason," she said, at last.

"And the first name?"

Again her hesitation was obvious. All the time, during those first few minutes of our meeting, she seemed to me to be trying to make up her mind about something.

"Moya," she said.

"And that isn't true, either," I said, rather sharply, "is it?"

"Why shouldn't it be true?"

"I don't know," I said, with a shrug. "I just feel it isn't, that's all."

"Well, a name's just a—a name." Her eyes switched suddenly to my face. "Now you can tell me yours," she said.

"Oh, just call me anything you like. Tom Smith will do."

A smile, queer, and very slight, touched her face, was gone again in a flash.

"It sounds a very *ordinary* sort of name."

"Exactly; that's what I think. Well, now that you're here, Mrs. Mason—"

"*Miss*," she interrupted.

I glanced at her hand. There was no ring there, merely a faint bluish circle where once a ring might have been.

"You notice things, don't you, Mr. Smith?"

"Just a habit of mine," I said.

Now, watching this woman, Moya, I noticed something else. It was as she walked away from me, I think.

She had such remarkably pretty feet.

Her shoes, too, were pretty ones; smart-looking, with high French heels. I found myself staring at them rather absurdly.

"You'll find it a difficult task getting about this island with shoes like those," I remarked.

The slightest shade of annoyance flickered across her face.

"Why? What's wrong with them?"

"Nothing. In fact, they suit you admirably. But they won't do—here."

"Oh, now I see what you mean." She smiled, her annoyance with me vanishing in an instant. She was a moody little thing; from the very first I could tell that. Quick to love or hate, quick to tears or laughter, quick to forgive, yet just as quick, I imagined, to take revenge for any slight or wrong, whether real or fancied.

"Well, Mr. Smith, what do you suggest?"

I glanced down, smiling slightly, at my own feet. They were quite bare. Long usage had hardened them.

"Why not follow my example?"

Her willingness surprised me, although it shouldn't have done; she was such a creature of moods.

"Very well," she said, with a laugh, "I will."

She sat down again, turned her back to me, and started to remove her shoes and stockings.

That night, in the shadow-haunted hut on the beach, we talked of many things. Indeed, it was nearing dawn before we slept. I made up a couch for her at the back of the hut, where it was partitioned off and there was a small wood-stove. I slept little. The woman, Moya, kept my thoughts alive. I was tremendously curious about her; and I felt that she, too, was more than ordinarily curious about me. I remember the last things I thought about, before dropping into sleep, were those pretty, high-heeled shoes of hers.

When I woke, the breakfast was cooked and ready. Somehow, it gave me a thrill—a thrill of mingled surprise and pleasure. Moya was fussing round the stove, with an improvised apron round her.

It was a long, long time since any woman had cooked my food for me. The last one to do that had been my wife, Clarissa. A slender, fascinating little thing she'd been, with her red-gold hair, her ivory skin, her disarming, deceitful, child-like ways. Moya, too, had charm, but it was a different kind of charm from Clarissa's. Hers reminded me of a clear gold flame; Moya's was less flamboyant, paler, somehow.

Her hair was ash-coloured. She had strange eyes. Sometimes, according to her mood, they seemed almost colourless, like her hair. Then life would flash into them; one could see either delight or annoyance in them, hate or love, tenderness or spite. Often, during that morning, I found my own eyes meeting hers across the hut. She helped me clean it thoroughly. Afterwards, while I sat and smoked, and thought, she searched out my scattered assortment of foodstuffs, found some bags of flour and utensils, and began baking bread. It proved to be quite good bread, too. I suppose my expression of surprise rather amused her.

"What's the matter, Mr. Smith? Don't you like my bread?"

"It's excellent bread," I said.

"Well, then—don't I look as if I could cook?"

"You're much too pretty to be a good cook. It's an accepted axiom that really pretty women don't make good cooks."

We laughed together. Our eyes expressed a new interest, maybe a new liking for each other Odd, perhaps, that we should get to like each other so quickly.

Illustrated by A. W. SINDALL

Long Complete Story by

Stephen Phillips

Once I noticed her staring intently at my bare feet.

"You've got wonderfully shaped feet for a man," she said.

"Have I?" I said, in surprise. To me they had always seemed pretty ordinary sort of feet.

Next morning, when she was out on the beach, I went into the back of the hut and stood looking curiously at the small leather case she had brought with her. It wasn't locked. That curiosity got the better of me. I opened it. On top were two light, summery frocks. Somehow, as I touched the delicate fabric, an intimate little thrill ran through me. It was so long since my hands had touched a woman's frocks.

Underneath were shoes. Nothing else of wearing apparel; merely shoes. I counted them: fourteen shoes, seven pairs. With a sharp whistle of surprise, I was about to shut the case when something drew my attention. Lying at the bottom of the case was a small studio portrait of a man. On it, in almost schoolboy handwriting, was scrawled: "To Moya, my darling, my wife."

I put the portrait back. The very touch of it seemed to be burning my fingertips like fire. I shut the case, scowling. I walked slowly, deliberately, into the hot glare of the sun. Moya *was* married. She had lied to me. Why?

She was sitting on a rock, along the beach, dabbling her pretty feet in the warm blue of the ocean. There was a real island breeze that morning. It was scented and warm. It held the incense of China, the sting of San Francisco's smoke-stacks. It ruffled her ash-coloured hair as she turned and laughed at me. She might have known me for years.

"What do you call your island, Mr. Smith?"

I said, sullenly: "It's not really *my* island at all."

She looked at me a little wonderingly, as if my tone had surprised her.

"All right, Mr. Grumpy Man. But tell me its name."

"James Island," I growled. "Mean to say you didn't know?" I had almost forgotten that I knew so little about her and the motive which had brought her to that lonely island of the South Pacific.

"I was told its name," she said, "but I just wanted to make sure. When does your ship arrive?"

"Every ten weeks."

"When did it call last?"

"About three weeks ago."

"That means I'll be here for seven weeks, at least."

I looked at her. My voice was a little husky: "You—you're anxious, I suppose, to get away again, now you've seen the—the island?"

Her eyes met mine, with the scented air and sun glinting between us. It was a warm, friendly, *intimate* look.

"No," she said, thoughtfully, "I don't think I'm so very anxious to leave."

"You—you like my island?" I stammered, with the foolish eagerness of a schoolboy.

"It's too much like Heaven here," she said. "Sometimes it makes me *afraid*."

"What of?"

"Afraid that it can't last," she said, in a low voice.

"You *want* it to last?"

"Terribly," she breathed.

My heart jumped, then raced sickeningly. I put out my hands towards her, then pulled them back again. In that husky voice, I said: "Why did you lie to me, Moya?"

"What do you mean?"

"About your husband," I said.

She sat very still. Her feet had ceased to play and splash in the ocean.

"I—I didn't lie," she said.

I grew angry at that. I loathe deceit of that sort.

"You told me you weren't married."

"It's true," she said. "I'm not. My husband died nearly a year ago."

I lifted up my face to the blazing gold-green skies. A mood of almost idiotic gratitude swept over me. I could have danced down there on the beach, like a fool. Suddenly I became sober again.

"I, too, was married, once," I said. "She, too—died."

Her hand crept out to mine, and the intimate sweetness of her gesture swept me off my feet. I drew her to me; our lips met in an ecstasy more of the spirit than the body. A long time we sat, close together, scarcely speaking. Those moments, I think, were the most beautiful ones I ever knew, ever shall know. For I loved this woman, this strange, motiveless creature, Moya; and my love for her was deeper, wider, than my love had ever been for Clarissa, my dead wife.

The night came, an island night, a thing of dusk and jewels. The ocean was a vast glitter, the palms splashed Gargantuan shadows. Far out, as we walked or paused together, hand in hand, the sea wind ruffling our hair, the ocean tumbled, splashing sharp white ribs under the moon, and the boom of the breakers on the barrier-reef swamped our senses, like the thunder of some mad organist in an empty church.

And yet, later, when I was alone, the old depression returned, with an even greater intensity than ever. I remembered Clarissa, and what I had done.

Six lonely, terrible years I had brooded. Once I had been rather fond of my wife, Clarissa . . .

The coming of this woman, Moya, had lightened my gloom, that fearful, brooding depression. I could smile again, and joke. It was wonderful to feel like that.

In the dawn I took her hand.

"Come," I breathed, "and let me show you the most perfect place in the South Seas."

She hung back, teasing me; and never had I loved her more than I did then.

"Where are we going?" she demanded, her eyes shining. "To Paradise?"

"The nearest thing to it below," I said, holding her very tightly. "Where the crimson hibiscus flames and the water-plants walk down to the sea like green fire . . . Come."

Seven silver staircases lead to Heaven, it has been said; and that day we climbed them all, each in its turn. Perhaps we came down those seven silver staircases rather more sanely; but madness can be an exquisite torture. That night earth and ocean had a veil, a mystic glitter, and we were oddly silent. I got my revolver out of a drawer, began to clean it with some oiled cotton-rag. I heard her come in through the doorway. Moments of silence, in which she stood there rigidly, her eyes fixed on me, caused me to turn my head.

Her face, against the gloom of the room, was as white as chalk. She made a gesture, almost like a ghost.

I sprang up, concerned.

"What is it, Moya? You—you're not ill?"

Her eyes were staring at the broken gun in my hand.

"Please put—that thing—away," she said, very slowly, with an effort almost.

I went to the table, dropped it into the drawer, shut it. And suddenly my hands were wet and clammy. I felt sick and my knees trembled . . .

She sat down; in her attitude there was a nervous weakness, a lassitude almost. My breath came heavily. I could feel my hands opening and shutting. My heart pounded, then stood still so long I began to wonder if it would ever beat again.

"Moya," I said, in some strange, unrecognisable voice, "what—what frightened you, my dear? Was it—the *gun*?"

Her face was turned away. Suddenly, because my legs were so weak, I sat down.

"I—I must tell you something, Moya."

"What is it?" Her voice was almost inaudible.

"It's about my—my wife," I said.

She might have been a stone woman who sat there in the gloom of the hut.

"Yes, Tom?" she said, at last.

Above us a tiny *magi* spider hung suspended on a thin red line of web. My eyes watched it desperately.

"What about your wife, Tom?"

My eyes still watched that crimson spider.

"I killed her," I said.

She didn't move, or flinch away from me, as I quite expected she might do.

"You mean——?"

"Just that," I said.

There was a stillness, then. The crimson spider dropped downwards. I brushed it to the floor, put my foot on it.

"They sting you," I said, like a man who was half stupid.

She rose. I heard her walk to the hut door. The moon was over the matted black jungle, and her ash-coloured hair was like pallid flame against the outer darkness of the night.

"What was her name, Tom?"

"Clarissa," I said.

"Was she—pretty?"

"Very."

"And you—you killed her?"

I got up and pushed more wood into the stove.

"*Why*, Tom?"

"I—I was mad," I said.

"With what?"

"Jealousy, I suppose most people would call it." There was a sort of weak defiance in my voice, then. "You see, I—I found her with another man."

(*Continued overleaf*)

Continuing The WOMAN on my ISLAND

She turned towards me. I expected to see fear in her face, even a sort of loathing; instead, I saw sympathy, a strange understanding. Her arms went about me, like the arms of a mother. I put my hot face on her knees, and she sat stroking my hair, saying not a word for a long time.

"Poor Tom. . . . How you must have suffered."

"It's been hell," I said. At that moment I could have wept like a baby, but some hidden strength in her helped me to control my own weakness.

"You say you found this man and your wife—together?"

"Yes."

"What happened then?"

"I—I shot them both. I—I thought just now, when you looked at that gun so *queerly*. . . ."

"Poor Tom. . . . How long ago was that?" I looked up at her, into her face; it seemed to me, even then, that she already knew the answers to her questions, was just putting them to me in order to verify the facts.

"Six years," I said; "maybe a little longer."

"And then you came here," she said, "to this lonely little island to—forget, if you could. But you found you couldn't forget. You—you'd wake sometimes, when the night was very, very dark, with your throat aching and dry . . . and your heart beating so hard you couldn't get your breath . . ."

"How do you know?" I said, my voice like a thing broken in pieces because her words had been so vivid—and so true. "How do you know, Moya?"

"Tell me the rest," she said; "just briefly, will you, Tom?"

"Of course. You see, it had been going on for a long time. The—the thing worked in me until I couldn't stand it any longer. It was the evening I was due to dine with three friends of mine. Jimmy, James, and John. . . . Funny, they had names so much alike. I was at school with all three of them. Afterwards, we went through the War together. I—I want you to understand, Moya. Our friendship was solid, strong; steel rooted in cement.

"I'd planned it all beforehand. Half-way through dinner I made an excuse and left them for a few minutes. I knew, you see, where I should find my wife and—and this man. Well, I found them. . . .

"A crazy man I was that night. I—I got back and finished dinner with Jimmy, James and John. Next day the police came to question me. I was questioned thoroughly. You see, the other fellow happened to be a world-famous politician. Naturally, the English papers splashed the—the story all over their front pages. Even European newspapers made a feature of the case. The world's press seized on it; it became an international sensation.

"Eventually, I was arrested and charged with the—murder. Every word, every smallest detail got into the press. But my pals stuck to me through thick and thin. They never asked me if I'd done it. I think they *knew*. They swore I'd never left the dinner-table and the prosecution couldn't shake their testimony one little bit. They were solid, those fellows; steel rooted in cement. . . .

"Then came the acquittal. But for Jimmy, James and John I might have been hanged.

"I escaped the death sentence to find something even worse. My pictures had been printed in all the newspapers. I was better-known, apparently, than the Prime Minister. People used to stop and stare and point at me in the streets. So I came to the Islands, my nerves at breaking-point. I found this little place, literally a haven to me. And here I've been living ever since, just trying to—to deaden my thoughts, chloroform my conscience. Somehow, until you came, I was never quite able to do that. But you—now you've come to me, given me your love, your understanding . . ."

She said, in a very strange voice: "Tom, do you mind turning down the light a little?"

I walked, rather unsteadily, across the room and lowered the lamp-wick.

"There's something I must tell you now," she said.

"Yes? What?"

"About my husband."

"What about him?" I asked, rather impatiently.

"I—I *killed* him," she said, with remarkable steadiness.

The black gloom of the hut seemed to swirl and sweep about us. I pushed the door open and the night breeze entered.

"I—I was always so fussy about *little* things," she said, "things which, I suppose, didn't really matter very much. But I could never stand *dirty* shoes. If I ever got a spot of dirt or mud on them, it would worry me terribly until I could get them clean again. I was always worrying and fretting about insignificant things. The medical profession, I believe, have a term for it. 'Anxiety neurosis,' I think they call it.

"That morning," she went on quickly, passionately, "we'd had another quarrel. I forgot now what it was about, exactly. But—his ways irritated me to distraction sometimes. He never seemed to grow up, for one thing; and I loathe childish men. Sometimes I felt like rushing into the garden and *screaming*.

"That evening he'd come home from work in one of his childish tempers. That didn't improve matters, because I happened to be in a temper, too.

"We went out. I had some shopping to do. It had been freezing all day. The pavements were slippery in places. Then it began to rain. Robert's feet were soon soaked. He was wearing a very old pair of shoes, which he used for the garden. I—I think he put them on deliberately to aggravate me. He knew how fussy I'd always been about shoes."

"We passed a shoe-shop. I can remember now how the lights glittered through the rain. I insisted on his going in and buying himself a decent pair of shoes. He argued heatedly, but went at last. He always detested new shoes.

"He kept walking a few yards in front of me, with a scowl on his face. We came to a crossing. Robert was standing on the kerb. There were quite a lot of people waiting to get across. A bus came along. *I felt the mud splashing over my feet.* I looked down and noticed my shoes. They were *filthy* . . . Then I noticed Robert's scowling, silly face . . ." She drew a sharp breath. "Then," she said, "*I pushed him.*"

My hands worked clammily.

"Under—under the bus, you mean?"

"Yes. I—I noticed a woman. She seemed to be staring at me accusingly. She opened her mouth to scream something. There was a policeman coming across the street. I could see his helmet shining wetly in a street-lamp. I—I turned and walked away. I had some money in the bank. There was a ship leaving for the East that night. I bought a passage to Shanghai. It was the first place I thought of . . . I—I was like a crazy woman."

She burst into a hot passion of tears. With those wet, clammy-feeling hands I did my best to comfort her.

"Funny," I said, "how Fate seems to have thrown us together on this island. What an unbelievable coincidence."

"It's no coincidence," she said.

"What?" I demanded, staring.

"I came here purposely," she said. "I was at Port London then. There was a portrait of you in one of the papers. You were standing on the beach, with your hands in your pockets. 'Mr. Andrew Hale,' it stated, "who, six years ago, figured prominently in one of the most sensational murder trials which have ever startled the British public." It gave a picture of the hut, too, and a brief summary of what happened six years ago.

"For nearly a year I'd been wandering from place to place, expecting every moment to feel a policeman touch me on the shoulder and say, 'I want you.' It—it's been more awful than I can describe. I never felt safe. I kept moving from place to place, sometimes only staying a night, or a few hours. Then I saw this picture of you. I remembered something about the crime. I—I know I had felt terribly sorry for you, and was glad when you were acquitted. One night, desperate with fear, I crept down to the docks. Two men seemed to have been following me all day. They looked like detectives. I crept on board the *San Toi*. She was passing through the Islands. I gave him money—the skipper, I mean."

"What made you decide to come here, to me?"

"That's what I'm trying to explain. I—I thought, for one thing, I should be safe on such an out-of-the-way little island. Then, too, I was curious. About you, I mean. Curious, and *sorry*. I—I knew what I'd been through, you see. Somehow, I—I had the desire to—to try and comfort you, as I hoped, some day, to be comforted. There seemed to be a common *something* which united us in our misery and despair, so I came."

She slept at last, like a tired child; and, while she slept, I bent to kiss her damp white brow. . . .

In the morning our fears seemed to vanish. Our love seemed deep and strong as the ocean. There was a kinship which united us, and made us one. We shared our sympathy, our understanding, as we shared food and drink.

The *American Boy* put in with stores.

"Now's your opportunity," I said, with a contented smile, "if you want to go back to the world."

She clasped my hand almost fiercely.

"I *never* want to go back," she said.

She went down to the boat and asked Petersen, the master, to fetch her a batch of newspapers next time he called.

"I dared not glance at a paper after it happened," she said to me. "I was too scared. But now I feel I should like to know."

"Of course, my dear," I said.

The ship sailed away again, into the vastness of the ocean. Then followed ten weeks of such exquisite bliss that I am quite unable—unwilling, even—to attempt to describe. The *American Boy* came again on a stormy yellow dawn, fiercely ominous. I walked into the hut, that morning, humming a gay little song. I saw Moya. She was standing stiffly in the middle of the hut, and there was an expression in her face which I am quite unable to describe. Yet, for some reason, I felt a stabbing fear go through my heart.

"You'd better read it," she said, and her voice might have come to me from miles away.

I picked up the paper. It was a year old, and, on the front page, was printed a report of the inquest held on Mr. Robert Sonning, well-known marine engineer, Moya's husband. The print swam about, grew blurred as I read: "A verdict of Death from Misadventure was recorded at the inquest held on Mr. Robert Sonning. Giving evidence, the driver of the bus declared that Mr. Sonning seemed to *slip* on the wet pavement. The coroner suggested that a probable cause of the tragedy was the fact that the dead man was wearing a pair of new shoes at the time of the fatality . . ."

"Well?" I said, somewhat densely.

She flung round. Her arms flew out in front of her in such a gesture of relief that I was a little startled.

"Don't you see?" she cried. "*No one saw me push him.*"

I stared at her.

"What makes you look at me like that?" she said.

"Am I looking?"

She flew past me to the door. With a kind of rapture her eyes scanned the horizon.

"I'm *free*," she said. "I—I can even return to the world out there. I——"

I gripped her by the arms.

"Moya, what are you saying?"

"Let me go." Panting, she dragged herself away from me; and suddenly, in her eyes, as she stared at me, I saw not sympathy, not understanding, not love; but *fear*.

"What's the matter with you?" I said, huskily. "You've never looked at me like that before, as if—as if I might be a——"

"*Murderer*," she breathed. "Well, why shouldn't I say it?" She was pressing herself into the wall, as far away from me as she could get, with the back of her hand drawn across her open lips. "That's what you *are*, isn't it? A—a——"

Rage shook me suddenly.

"What are you, then? You—you——"

She sprang away from the wall.

"That—that's a lie. I didn't kill him. It was just an accident. Don't the papers say it was an accident?"

"But you said——"

"What does it matter what I said? I—I may have given him a—a little push. I was in such a temper . . . But I didn't mean to push him under that 'bus. I—I never pushed him *hard* enough for that. He—he must have *slipped*, as the papers say. Of course, that's what really happened. Only, at the time, I was so scared I couldn't think clearly."

I took her by the shoulders.

"Moya, don't lie to *me*, at any rate. What's the use?"

"I—I'm not lying, I tell you." She tore herself away. "Let—let me go."

Suddenly, as I tried to hold her, her fingers came down my face like claws. She ran out into the dawn, a dawn which had already become morning. I shouted. I, too, began to run. But she didn't look back at me. Barefooted, like some wild thing, she ran towards the ship's boat, which was already being pushed off from the beach.

I saw her reach it and jump in. I stopped dead, trembling like a leaf. The boat pushed off.

Never once did she look back at me.

At last, when the vessel was out of sight, I turned back to the hut. Slowly, with dragging feet, I went inside.

On a shelf which I had made specially stood her shoes. Eight smart, pretty pairs of them. I stared in bitter silence.

Laughter

The "PASSING SHOW" Smile Section

"You can practise on the next customer but be careful not to cut yourself."

"That's the first time I've won this week."

"We won't get half so much fun, Bert, when this line's electrified."

"You certainly have reduced since we began this act."

"I don't know how to break it to her. She's autographed three hundred copies of someone else's book."

The sculptor becomes a pavement artist.

A MAN PAPERHANGS

"Wait here ; I forgot my gun ! "

By A. C. BARRETT

"Hi, pop! You got the wrong sword."

"Are you the gent who advertised for a bee-keeper?"

"Practise your shorthand by all means, but not on the pastry."

LAUGH WITH THE WORLD

"You are a liar! You told me last night you were with the Smiths, and now you say you were with the Podziwitzkys."
"That is quite right. Last night I could not say 'Podziwitzsky.'"
Das Illustrierte Blatt, Frankfurt.

"I've bought you a whistling kettle, darling. You're so fond of hot music."
Smith's Weekly, Sydney.

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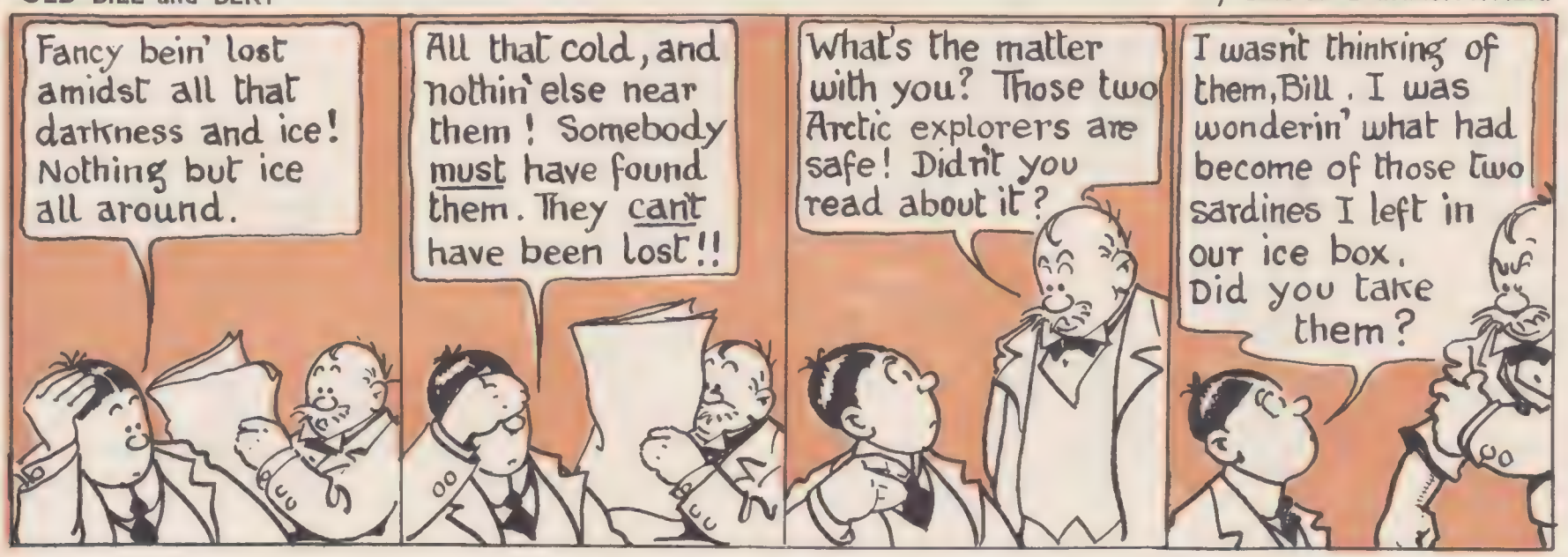
It must be done–it's very clear to see
But–if someone's got to do the blessed cleaning
Why the something something always me!

"I always wash and iron on Mondays and my 'usband works in 'is garden—flood or no flood."

OLD BILL and BERT — by BRUCE BAIRNSFATHER.



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Continuing

Unlike Other Ladies

by Marjorie Bowen

The Secret of the Merciless Marquise

AS the last light of a sombre autumn day fell over the streets of Paris, a hired carriage made its way to an unfrequented alley in one of the poorest quarters of the capital.

The ancient coachman drew up his miserable horse at the low, dirty archway over which hung a battered sign which showed a painting of a black cock. The carriage door was hastily opened and a woman quickly descended into the filthy street.

She wore a hooded cloak and, as was then usual, a mask to protect her complexion; long gloves covered her hands and arms; all her attire was of the drab colour affected by the wives and daughters of shopkeepers.

But as the woman raised her arm to pay the driver, her mantle fell apart and the astonished old man saw on her bosom the coloured fires of diamonds and the glitter of a blue satin scarf. Terrified lest he had trespassed on one of the dangerous secrets of the great, the driver affected to see nothing, clutched his money and drove hastily away from the dark, crooked street; he could not, however, forbear looking back, but the woman had vanished under the dismal passage arch, above which hung a dim lamp and the cracked board with the black bird.

The old fellow knew his Paris well, but this quarter was so obscure that it was unknown to him and his curiosity was intense; he recalled that his passenger had been one of three plainly dressed women who had hailed him at the bridge head, and that his passenger had not spoken but that very careful directions had been given him by one of her companions. He had therefore no clue whatever as to the identity of the mysterious lady with the diamonds who had thus coolly ventured into what looked like a thieves' kitchen of the worst description, and he began to think of all the dark and horrible crimes that had taken place in Paris—the authors of which the police could not discover—and of the constant rumours of witchcraft and poisoning that went fearfully from mouth to mouth.

So the next morning, after a bad night, old Jacques told the incident of the masked woman to his son, who at first laughed, but then, more as a joke than anything else, wrote in a clear hand on a scrap of paper: "Watch the sign of the Black Cock where a lady with a blue bow and diamonds visits." He added the name of the alley, the street, the quarter, and sent the letter to the Chief of Police.

This paper was delivered to M. La Reynie as he was on his way to the most fashionable shop in Paris, that kept by Madame La Voisin and her pretty daughter; these two ladies, who were of good birth and excellent character, sold perfumes, cosmetics, gloves, fans, handkerchiefs and dozens of other trifles, all rare, costly and novel.

The Chief of Police was not himself interested in such matters, for he was an austere man, devoted to his duty, but he often went to this frivolous meeting place of all the fashionable Parisians in order to pick up gossip and to keep his eye on various people of whom he had strong if secret suspicions.

Affecting a gaiety he did not feel, M. La Reynie sauntered into the inner room where Madame La Voisin received her most favoured clients and asked to see some samples of Flemish lace.

It was a charming little apartment, furnished with mirrors, rose-coloured velvet and chairs of gilt leather cushioned with brocade, and on a couch sat the most beautiful and famous woman in Paris turning over a tray of perfume bottles—Madame de Montespan, the King's mistress, who had been for fifteen years the uncrowned Queen of France.

M. La Reynie bowed and pretended to be interested in the boxes of Mechlin cravats and ruffles that were brought him while he exchanged light gossip with the sumptuous Marquise.

"Eh, Monsieur!" mocked the lady, "they say that more women than ever are poisoning their husbands—what are the police about?"

"It is indeed shocking," smiled M. La Reynie. "But one must not believe all one hears—and who knows but that the husbands are appalling bores?"

"Do you believe," asked Madame de Montespan lightly, "that there really *are* such dreadful creatures as poisoners?" She opened wide her brilliant blue eyes, and M. La Reynie, who knew her well, could not resist a fresh glow of admiration for her superb beauty.

Nearly forty years of age and the mother of several children, the Marquise was as untouched by time as when she had first captured the heart of Louis XIV; her dazzling colouring of white and coral, her lustrous curls of pure gold colour, her small serene features, her figure at once exquisite and stately combined to make her a woman of unsurpassable charm—it was no wonder, thought M. La Reynie, that even the fickle, amorous King had remained faithful to her so long, though all the beauties in France were competing for his favour.

"Why do you not answer my question, M. La Reynie? And why do you stare at me so?"

"Because of your beauty, Madame," replied the Chief of Police gaily. "As to your question—why, no, I think all this talk of poisoning and witchcraft is merely spiteful or stupid gossip. Probably these husbands died of over-eating!" And M. La Reynie laughed, holding up a pair of lace cuffs as he added: "I, at least, have not found any trace of poisoners in Paris."

"How you relieve me!" cried the Marquise, toying with a bottle of coloured glass and turning so that her full beauty blazed on the Chief of Police. Across her bosom was a knot of blue ribbon fastened by a cluster of diamonds; M. La Reynie, with no change of his light tone, said:

"I get such stupid anonymous letters! I have one in my pocket now, warning me to keep a watch on the Black Cock——"

The Marquise moved so violently that

She shrieked with terror as he pulled off his mask and the King's mistress gazed into the pale face and gleaming eyes of the King

the filigree tray of perfumes was cast to the floor and the powerful essences spilled over her silver skirts and the Persian carpet; M. La Reynie was instantly on his knees picking up the bottles and stoppers, while Madame La Voisin and her daughter came running in from the inner room with cries of fright.

"It is nothing!" laughed the Marquise. "I think a bee—a fly—stung me! What were you saying, Monsieur?"

"Why, Madame, I really forget. Ah, the anonymous letters I receive—such rubbish!"

"Well, I suppose you take no notice of them?"

"Scarcely. That would take all my time and that of my men! No, indeed, such stuff goes into the fire. Madame La Voisin, pray send me this pair of sleeves, these ruffles and half a dozen of these cravats."

M. La Reynie bowed himself out of the luxurious shop. At his carriage door he found one of his secret agents, disguised as a beggar, waiting for him.

"Monsieur," whispered this man as he appeared to implore alms, "Mdlle. Fontanges, whom the King is believed to admire so much, is seriously ill. It seems to be the same malady as that from which the Duchesse de la Vallière suffered."

M. La Reynie nodded and, seeming to give the man money, slipped into his hand the letter written by the son of old Jacques the coachman. "Have that place watched—very carefully." He stepped into his carriage and drove on, saying to himself: "I wonder, I wonder."

As soon as the Chief of Police had left the room, the Marquise turned to Madame La Voisin and whispered: "He mentioned the Black Cock—an anonymous letter!"

"But which one?" asked the other woman. "There are dozens in Paris. Does he suspect anything? Impossible!"

"I think so," sighed the Marquise. "He is a fool, or I should have him removed. Hush, no more here—it is too dangerous." Her vivid blue eyes flashed to the cool, pale face of Catherine La Voisin. "Mdlle. Fontanges was taken ill this morning! The King will not admire her so much when he sees her pale and sick! No, she will have to retire into a convent like La Vallière—or die."

"You are safe," soothed Madame La Voisin. "Failure is impossible."

The beautiful woman's bosom heaved with strong passion as she cast a fierce look at the tranquil maker of perfumes.

"I will keep him," whispered the King's mistress. "I will keep him—at any cost!"

The police spy had nothing to report to M. La Reynie about the house in the dull little alley where old Jacques had driven the masked lady. There was, he said, a wood yard and old clothes shop of the poorest description kept by an almost imbecile old man who inhabited one of the tumbledown houses; the others were empty, while one side of the court was occupied by a disused chapel.

"Another trick or joke!" sighed M. La Reynie wearily. It was always the same; when he thought that he had a clue it vanished!

Yet he was not wholly satisfied; what a coincidence that the letter should mention the blue ribbon and diamonds and that Madame de Montespan should cast down the tray as he mentioned the Black Cock! Besides, he had long suspected her of more than he dare express save to his faithful lieutenant, La Peloure. To this man, in the privacy of his closet, the Chief of Police said:

"La Peloure, I believe that a trifle has put me on the way of unmasking some great crimes. But the work is of the utmost danger."

The thin, dark face of the lieutenant sharpened with anxiety.

"I know whom you mean, Monsieur. And I beg of you to leave Madame de Montespan alone—she is the most powerful person in France."

"And why?" asked La Reynie keenly. "She is not young, she is hard, vile tempered, arrogant, extravagant—the King is often attracted by other women, and yet she, insolent, rapacious, cruel, keeps her dominion over a man naturally proud and independent who admires youth, softness and gentle gaiety in women."

"Whatever you suspect, leave her alone, Monsieur."

"Her rivals," continued La Reynie sternly, "either are stricken by long illnesses that ruin them or die suddenly—men and women who oppose the Montespan disappear overnight. I cannot leave this matter——"

"The King would not heed——"

"Anything but proofs!" exclaimed La Reynie. "And proofs I intend to obtain. Alone, if you wish."

The following evening, as soon as the October dusk fell, two wretched looking scavengers, with sacks on their backs, their legs tied in straw, their filthy coats tied with string, their faces hidden by grey hair and ragged beards, could be seen searching in the gutters near the alley of the Crooked Foot and diligently gathering up such refuse as the misery of the quarter afforded.

These two men, whom no one noticed, were La Reynie and La Peloure; for a week they watched the passage, then, for three evenings in succession they saw four women, humbly dressed, slip severally down the alley and under the dismal arch where hung the painted cock creaking in the night wind.

"Do they go to buy wood or rags at this time of night?" asked La Reynie. "Did you notice their slim ankles, dainty shoes and graceful walk?"

"It is certainly odd," agreed La Peloure. "They stay so long, too—yet we know that there is nothing in that courtyard but a rag picker—some broken-down houses and a deserted chapel."

"We shall see," said La Reynie, whose methods were slow and cautious, but always carried out with unflinching courage.

On the day that he learned that Mdlle. de Fontanges was so ill that she had withdrawn from court, the Chief of Police and his assistant, still disguised as rag pickers, turned down the passage of the Crooked Foot as dusk was falling, glanced at the dismal hovels that lined it, passed under the arch and knocked at the old clothes man's door.

A bent, toothless old creature opened to them and admitted them to his filthy shop which was no more than a half-fallen shack leaning against the empty

(Continued on page 28)

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CONTINUING

The Secret *of the Merciless Marquise*

chapel, which was very old and had belonged to a handsome mansion that had stood upon this spot hundreds of years before.

While La Peloure showed the old man some rags he had brought, La Reynie, pretending to inspect the bales of rubbish about the place, was taking his bearings; as he had suspected, there was a door high in the wall, reached by a ladder, that must lead into the chapel. This, in contrast to the misery of the rest of the place, was strongly made with good hinges and a stout lock. It was now almost completely dark in the shop and the rag dealer began to grumble that he would do no more business that day and that his customers must be off.

"In good time," said La Reynie, and drawing an elegant pistol from his sack, he very deftly stuck it into the old man's side, La Peloure at the same time throwing his ragged scarf round the old man's mouth to prevent his squeals.

Seeing himself thus trapped, the old man affected imbecility and no sense could be got from him; La Reynie, however, found some keys on his person and one of them fitted the door in the wall; when the Chief of Police opened this he saw a very different place from the rat-infested, empty chapel that his agent had inspected.

The high placed windows of the chapel were shuttered, the place was hung in black, an altar draped in black had been erected in the centre of the floor; on it stood some black tapers, a pile of books bound in the same hue, a bowl, a knife, and a red lamp which was the sole light. Beside the altar stood a wicker cage containing a fine sable cock.

La Reynie saw at once that the chapel afforded no place of concealment, so he locked the door and flung the key to the rag merchant, declaring: "If you give any sign of our presence you are dead!"

A light scratching was heard on the outer door and the two police officers sprang behind the old clothes hanging on the wall, La Reynie holding his pistol steadily in the direction of the old man, who, after eyeing the steel rim of the muzzle fearfully, lit a rush light and hobbled to the street door.

The four women with whom La Reynie was familiar entered, took the keys without a word and passed up the steps into the chapel. La Peloure then crept out, bound and gagged the old man and kept watch at the outer door, while La Reynie, lowering his pistol, climbed silently up to the chapel door and put his eye to the keyhole.

The scene that he beheld was, even to one of his nerve and experience, fantastic and dreadful. The tallest of the women threw off her dingy cloak, her mask and gloves, and revealed the brilliant blonde beauty of Madame de Montespan, attired in a rich dress of pure white; two of the other women proved to be Madame La Voisin and her daughter, the fourth was a Madame Chaplain, favourite waiting woman of the Marquise; this last lit the black candles, opened the books on the altar and set black cushions in front of it, while the other women put black crepe veils over their white dresses.

La Reynie, motionless at the keyhole, believed that he was about to see a performance of the awful Black Mass where the aid of Satan was invoked by unholy rites. But Madame de Montespan put aside her companions who were about to begin customary ceremonies; she was in one of those passions of which the Chief of Police had often heard but which he had never witnessed. Throwing off all restraint and casting on the two La Voisin women the glances of a fury, the King's beautiful mistress exclaimed:

"She lives! La Fontanges lives!"

"Madame," said Catherine La Voisin firmly, "it would be dangerous for her to die. We are watched—perhaps suspected—the King——"

"Ay," stormed the Marquise, "tell me that the King has a tenderness for her!" She struck her white diamond-adorned bosom. "I say the King is mine—do you understand that, you filthy sorceress?"

"My filthy sorceries," replied La Voisin bitterly, "have been of use to you, I think, Madame. Did they not in the first place turn the King from La Vallière to you? Have I not—for years—kept you supplied with love potions—and with poisons, too?"

"What you gave me now was not powerful enough!" cried the Marquise. "The illness of La Fontanges is only an excuse for the King's concern——"

"You have twice missed the Black Mass, you neglect the spells," replied Madame La Voisin.

"Bah! I require the poison—that in the bouquet I sent was useless—so were the perfumed gloves."

Mdlle. La Voisin, who had stood silent and alarmed during this quarrel, now broke in:

"Mother—Marquise, pray be prudent—you know that the police have their suspicions—I am sometimes so frightened, there are so many people in this business."

For answer the Marquise turned on the two women, behind whom cowered the go-between.

"You have cause to be alarmed! Disobey me and I shall have you denounced to the police! Ay, and by one whose word would be believed!"

The sorceress cowered before this terrible Marquise.

"What do you want? You know that I am at your service."

"If I cannot keep the King," declared Madame de Montespan, "at least no one else shall have him. I demand the life of La Fontanges—and if he mourns her, if he leaves me again—that of the King."

A grim silence fell in the old, black hung chapel; the Marquise picked up her cloak, gloves and mask. "I cannot stay now. On Friday as usual! And see that everything is prepared."

There was a mutter of assent from mother and daughter; the waiting woman put out the candles and the four black robed figures proceeded to leave the chapel as La Reynie darted back into the shadows of the old clothes hanging at the back of the shop, and La Peloure, obeying his signal, joined him. The four women, deeply agitated, left the shop, not noticing the absence of the old rag picker. No sooner were they gone than the Chief of Police sent his lieutenant for help while he remained on guard over his prisoner.

M. La Reynie had only a few days in which to act and his position was one of great peril since Madame de Montespan, of whose guilt he himself was aware but of which he had no proof, was all powerful, and if she guessed that he suspected her, could easily send him and his colleagues to perpetual silence in the Bastille.

At first there was little to be gained from the old rag picker, who pretended imbecility, but a sight of the rack soon brought out the little he knew. He was one Chandelle, long wanted for forgery and coining; he was employed by Madame La Voisin to keep the old shop and chapel in the alley of the Crooked Foot; he knew that these premises were kept for the purposes of witchcraft and the Black Mass, but swore that he knew nothing of the women whom Madame La Voisin brought there.

M. La Reynie ordered this scoundrel's secret arrest and took his coach to Versailles where the King was in residence. The Chief of Police, who was well aware that he might sacrifice his life to his duty, had with him the attested deposition of Chandelle, that of Peloure, the anonymous letter from the son of old Jacques, and two torn handkerchiefs each marked with a crown and an M which he had picked up among the rubbish in the shop.

The Chief of Police was closeted with the King for nearly an hour; when he left the palace of Versailles it was by a secret door.

On the Friday that Madame de Montespan had appointed for the meeting in the deserted chapel, La Reynie returned to the rag shop which had been kept by La Peloure disguised as Chandelle; this man had nothing to report—no one had been near the alley of the Crooked Foot. La Reynie was accompanied by a tall gentleman, heavily cloaked and masked, who showed signs of great agitation and of intolerable disgust at his surroundings.

"M. La Reynie, if you have mistaken—or lied," he began, but there was a scratching at the door and La Reynie drew his companion behind the old clothes hanging at the back of the shop.

La Peloure opened the outer door and the four women, taking no notice of him, passed into the chapel—whereupon La Reynie and his companion took up their station at the top of the steps. It was the last who gazed, not through the keyhole, but through a knot hole carefully made by La Peloure.

The chapel had been prepared as before, but this time the impatience of the Marquise was even greater; throwing off her mask, she seized La Voisin by the shoulders and cried: "Have you brought it?"

"Yes. But I implore you, Madame, be careful——"

"I shall be careful," replied the Marquise passionately. "But neither shall I falter! The King shall learn that I am not so easily to be set aside."

"Madame, I cannot resist you, but remember—to attempt the life of the King——"

The Marquise brushed aside the sorceress and cried fiercely: "I need no more from you! This is sufficient! He dies! I'll wait for no rites or spells!"

Thrusting a phial into her bosom, she hurried to the door at the same moment as La Reynie on the other side, and on a word from his companion, blew a whistle for La Peloure to open the outer door and show the courtyard full of soldiers.

The Marquise pulled open the chapel door; the red light from the altar fell over her shoulder and showed her the man waiting at the top of the steps; as she shrieked with terror he pulled off his mask and the King's mistress gazed into the pale face and gleaming eyes of the King; she would have fallen had not La Reynie caught her and helped her to descend the steps.

For the last time Louis XIV touched the woman whom for years he had loved and trusted.

"One souvenir before we part for ever, Madame," he said hoarsely, and took from the lace on her bosom the phial of poison.

The next day the haughty Marquise de Montespan, so long, by the aid of La Voisin, uncrowned Queen of France, drove out of the Palace yard into perpetual exile and was never heard of again.

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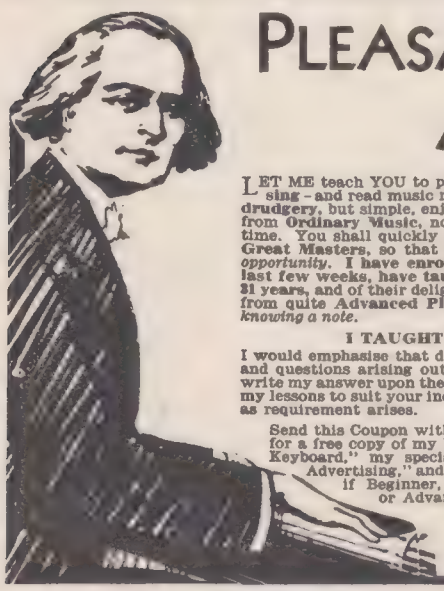

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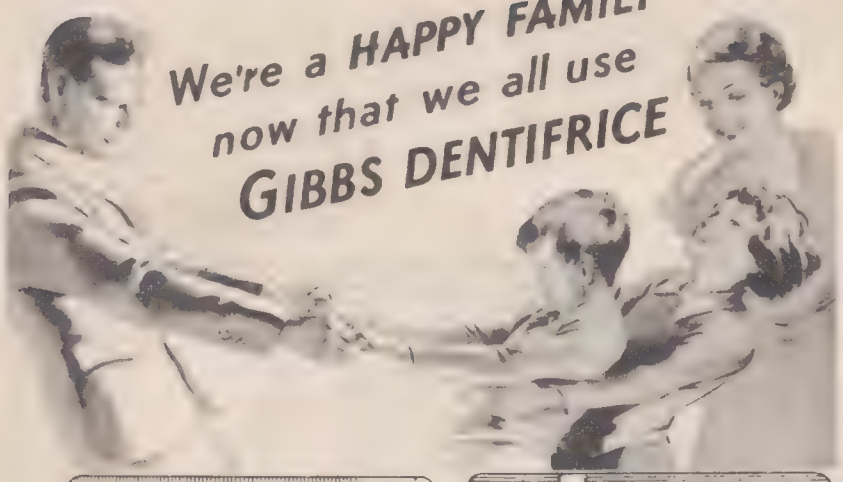

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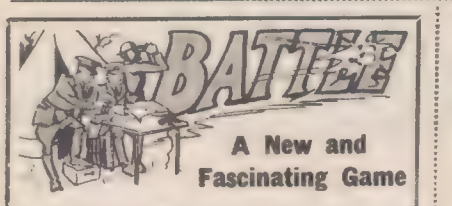

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Fashion without TEARS

WOMAN to WOMAN

CLOTHES! Ought I to have this or that? Does this suit me or does that? Can I afford it? Some of the eternal problems of every woman through all the ages; the one topic that interests alike young things on the verge of life, their mothers, and even, in these enlightened days, their grandmothers!

Woman's concern, and hers alone, you would imagine. And yet, it is an undeniable fact that so many of the really great dress designers, and founders of world-renowned fashion houses, in the past as well as to-day, have been men.

Recently, talking to Schiaparelli, famous everywhere for creating the loveliest and most originally individual clothes it is possible to buy, I asked her what, in her opinion, was the reason for this pre-eminence of man. Schiaparelli, an attractive, slim creature, with a spontaneous charm of personality, whose most striking features are her alert, vivid, brown eyes and humorous mouth, hesitated for a moment before answering:

"There are, as well, a number of outstanding women in my profession," she declared, rattling off their names, "but when it comes to the question of clothes, men are apt to be more impersonal than women. A woman is always a little biased, she inevitably thinks of herself in connection with any garment she is creating. Also, men, as a whole, have, I think, better taste than women. I do not mean all men, of course, but the fine sensitive ones, to whom art and beauty make a strong appeal. I am always glad when a woman who comes to order clothes brings a man with her. He is sure to know what suits her better than she knows herself. You see, he is more objective than she, more outside her personal prejudices and, therefore, better able to judge."

Photo by PETER NORTH

Madame Schiaparelli

In Schiaparelli's view, the type of man who makes the ideal dress designer is he who possesses many women friends, for through these friendships he grows to understand feminine psychology. Moreover, women learn to trust him. Such a man exercises a deeper influence on women and their taste, than it is possible for one of their own sex to do. If he assures them that a certain style or garment is becoming, they believe him readily. Whereas, if a woman were to say the same thing, they might remain unconvinced. "They would wonder automatically," explained Schiaparelli, with a smile, "if there were not a catch somewhere. Another reason," she added, "why it is easier for a man to succeed with a dress business, than it is for a woman, is that his clients advertise him far more enthusiastically than they would any woman."

I asked Schiaparelli, who dresses most of the ultra-smart women in Europe and America, what she thought of the women of to-day.

"They ought to be very easy to dress," she answered, "and they ought all to look delightful. They have good figures, they are slim; they play games, and dance, and walk in the fresh air, which makes them trim and supple; but, unfortunately, many of them have no taste. They incline to fussiness. They want to own too many things. They would rather have three cheap, showy dresses than one good, more expensive gown. They do not pay attention to detail. They try to look like other people, whether the style suits them or not. They care too little for quality and appropriateness. They do not take enough trouble about vital accessories—such as shoes, bags, gloves, hair—particularly hair—it is the most important of all. If I were a woman of moderate means, I would sooner have one dress which suited me, and send it to the cleaners from time to time, than several of inferior taste and quality which would not express my individuality."

When I questioned Schiaparelli as to the source of her inspiration, she smiled reflectively:

"I get ideas from all kinds of things; from anything, even from your English weather," she nodded whimsically towards the window, where big, variegated clouds were sailing triumphantly across a pale blue sky.

There is an amusing story which bears out this statement of hers. Last year, Schiaparelli was travelling in Denmark, and happened to visit the fish market of a certain town. Here, she saw the fish-wives pursuing their trade, wearing on their heads queer, yet becoming hats twisted together out of newspaper. On her return to Paris, she summoned her assistant.

"I want some newspaper material printed," she commanded, and told him all about the fishwives and their hats. Immediately, he caught her enthusiasm.

"But what shall we print, and on what material?" he queried.

"I am always glad when a woman brings a man to help her choose her clothes. He has better taste than she." Says Schiaparelli.

discussed by

Schiaparelli

with

Henrietta Leslie

"Scraps of news about the things that concern women," he was told. "Articles dealing with beautiful houses, with clothes, with jewels, with cosmetics—all sorts of subjects, in all sorts of languages."

So the articles were collected, the material was produced, and out of it were fashioned enchanting beach frocks, gay sunshades, dressing-gowns, scarves, and beach hats.

The longer we talked, the more evident it became to me that this artist gleans her inspiration, in great part, from the manifold happenings taking place in the world around her—politics of the moment, current events—whatever they may be—revolutions, art exhibitions, wars, an air race—in fact, the patchwork fabric of life. The atmosphere of the times, and the changing needs which spring constantly into being are the forces by which, though they themselves are unaware of it, the manner of women's dress is governed.

"Fashions are decided," Schiaparelli told me, "by the life the public is leading at any given time. Which is why," she added, with a cryptic look, "clothes to-day are apt to be a little mad, and we are as unsettled in our taste as in everything else, trying first one thing and then another, in an attempt to find out what we really want."

Of course, one realises that Schiaparelli's standards are not for us, ordinary folk, but there is no reason why one should not adapt to one's own needs and purses, the general principles she had laid down. We all know that well-cut clothes, of good material, are a wise investment. To begin with, they do not date, and are becoming to the last thread.

On my return from Schiaparelli's, with her words of advice still ringing in my ears, I worked out a couple of budgets, one for a woman who can spend twenty pounds a year, and one, fifty pounds a year on her clothes.

Budget for an expenditure of £20 *per annum.*

	£	s.	d.
Tweed skirt		10	0
Two jumpers, home-knitted	0	10	0
Two half-sleeved blouses ...	0	10	0
Proportion of winter dress, new every other year, at £3 3s. 0d.	1	12	6
Best summer frock	1	10	0
Two washing frocks ...	1	5	0
Evening dress	2	2	0
Strong walking shoes ...	0	14	9
Light walking shoes ...	0	12	9
Bedroom slippers	0	5	11
Two pairs of dance shoes ...	1	0	0
Winter hat	0	10	9
Pull-on hat	0	3	11
Summer hat	0	12	9
Proportion of winter coat, at £2 10s., lasting two years	1	5	0
Proportion of summer coat, at £2 2s., lasting two years	1	1	0
Mackintosh	0	10	0
Stockings, gloves, undies, hair-dressing, toilet accessories	5	3	8
Total ...	£20	0	0

Budget for an expenditure of £50 *per annum.*

	£	s.	d.
Proportion of winter coat, at £6 6s., lasting two years	3	3	0
Proportion of summer coat, at £4 4s., lasting two years	2	2	0
One winter day dress ...	3	3	0
One best afternoon or semi-evening dress	4	4	0
One coatee for evening wear	1	0	0
Two evening dresses ...	10	10	0
Tweed skirt	1	1	0
Two jumpers, home-knitted	0	10	0
Jersey or cardigan	0	12	6
Three washing frocks ...	1	10	0
Best summer frock	2	2	0
Winter hat	0	15	0
Pull-on hat	0	5	9
Summer hat	0	12	11
Two pairs of street shoes ...	1	9	6
One pair of white shoes ...	0	5	11
Two pairs of dance shoes ...	1	1	0
Proportion of opera cloak, new every three years, at £5 5s.	1	15	0
Proportion of fur coat, lasting three years, at £12 12s. ...	4	4	0
Stockings, gloves, undies, hair-dressing, toilet accessories	9	13	5
Total ...	£50	0	0

I should like to add that in both these budgets, I have assumed that full advantage would be taken of the opportunities offered by the sales. And, also, I should like to suggest that both budgets can be greatly varied, by a little ingenuity. For instance, in the twenty pound budget, the winter dress allowed for, every other year, as well as the evening dress, can, with various additions become, as it were, the foundation of what will seem like two or three frocks. Collars, belts, beads, flowers to match, transform any gown. So do the ornamental, detachable buttons, now so fashionable. Then, too, there are charming little capelets, made to button on, and for evening, attractive coatees and sashes can be very easily contrived from alluring remnants, to be picked up for a mere song, both in and out of sales.

In fact there is no end to the devices continually being invented by clever minds, to help the intelligent woman, not over-burdened with this world's goods, to dress becomingly and well.

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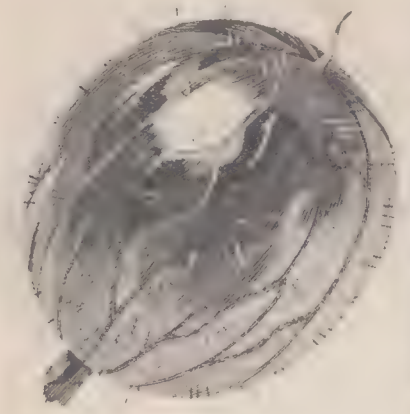

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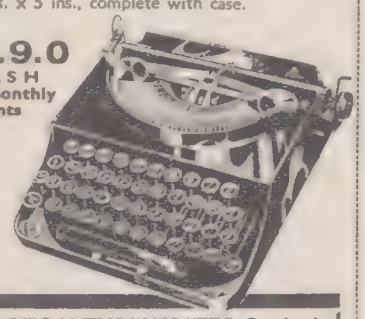

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C 25

Cronin's long-tried patience snapped. He disposed of Rood with one short jab of his fist.

To a Lady

IN the shade of the awninged bridge, Captain Michael Cronin sat slumped in a chair. He stuffed the bandana deeper into the collar of his rumpled whites and met the eyes of his chief engineer.

"Funny? Of course there's something funny! When Rood is willing to risk that precious neck of his on one of his own ships, you can wager your last shirt something's blasted funny!"

Mr. Hobbs' mild little eyes were clouded. He stood back against the rail, plucking at the black tufts of hair that bushed from the neck of his grimy singlet. He shrugged. "If Rood says we'll sail at midnight, I expect we sail. But there's them b'ilers leakin' a mite—not much, mind, but enough. And them——" Mr. Hobbs leaned forward, a new suspicion darkening his grizzled face. "Very peculiar the way he sneaked aboard. Why did he sneak aboard this mornin'—tell me that?"

Michael Cronin's chiselled face was inscrutable. "You tell *me*, Chief."

Mr. Hobbs shook his head. "Very peculiar. Very, very peculiar," he repeated, and went below muttering to himself.

Alone, Cronin packed his pipe with grim deliberation. He had his own suspicions—suspicions so strong as to be convictions. For eight months the freighter *Lady Bella* had tramped the west coast doing little more than burn coal and belch cinders. What cargo they had managed to seduce from chary agents had been quickly eaten up by repairs. Glaringly obvious was the fact that the *Lady* was costing her owner money every moment she was afloat. He knew Rood. Rood didn't take a loss if there was any way on God's earth of redeeming it. There was one way, and it wasn't beneath a man like Rood—nothing was.

No doubt Rood's warped little mind had reasoned that it was his ship because he owned her and that he could do with her as he pleased.

Yes, Rood owned her, but to Michael Cronin the *Lady Bella* was bound by stronger ties. For almost a year he had felt her throbbing under him. Laying black and dour in the sheltered waters off Salina Cruz, the slow surge of the sea slapping against her blistered flanks, she presented to the casual eye no sign of her former gentility. But Captain Cronin's eye was not casual. He had come to love the *Lady* with an intensity exceeded only by his hatred for Asa Rood. It was men like Rood who had made the *Lady* what she was. Every crime but arson had been committed on her. Long before Rood had picked her up for a bad debt, she had been marked as a renegade.

Midnight found the *Lady Bella* picking her way around the shoal. She cleared the headlines, sliced northward through a smooth flowing sea.

Captain Cronin stood alone staring out over the bridge dodger. Dimly he could see the nose of the *Lady Bella* lift and fall as she took the seas.

His eyes searched aft to where the log from the taffrail trailed into the boil of a snaky wake. "Make your course good!" he snapped to the helmsman. He nodded to his chief officer. "Your watch, Mr. Bowen." He stumped below to his cabin.

A small hatchet-faced man was waiting for him. "Everything all right, Captain?" he inquired amiably.

"As far as I'm concerned it is, Rood," Cronin said. He closed the door behind him and stood there in the shadows of the room. "Well . . .?"

Complete Story by

LEW DIETZ

Illustrated by Sinclair Callow

Asa Rood settled deeper in his chair. He drew two cigars from his vest and extended one. "Smoke?"

Cronin shook his head curtly. "No thanks."

"No?" Rood shrugged. He replaced one cigar and bit off the tip of the other. He proceeded to light it carefully. The lighted match still in his hand, he looked over at Cronin. "You wonder why I'm here, perhaps?"

Cronin fixed him steadily. "You didn't come all the way down from Vancouver for the pleasure of my company. I know that much, Rood."

Rood puffed speculatively a moment. "I'm considering buying a new ship, Cronin," he said finally. "You're to be master, of course."

Cronin's expression didn't change. "Go on, Rood."

"Go on?" Rood appeared mildly surprised. "Isn't that clear enough for you, Captain?" He brushed a smudge of ashes from his coat and rose unhurriedly. His hand on the latch, he turned again. "Your innocence is charming but unconvincing, Captain. It's not as though you didn't know something about laying a ship on the rocks. Well . . . think it over."

Michael Cronin's face was not pleasant to behold at that moment. The eyes under the peak of his raffish cap were hard unblinking points of Arctic blue. "Get out, Rood," he said very quietly. "*Get out!*"

Rood hesitated, shrugged; then the door closed behind him. Still Cronin stood motionless. Then slowly his fingers relaxed; the long hard body sagged a little. He sank to his bunk, a cold resigned bitterness standing in his eyes.

Michael Cronin slept fitfully that night. He awoke upon a bleak, grey dawn and he didn't want to see that sly, leering face, those moist smiling lips. His fingers twitched when he thought of Asa Rood.

As he stepped out into the blackness of the deck, Rood's low voice sounded behind him. "Well, Cronin?"

Cronin came around. "I've nothing to say to you, Rood."

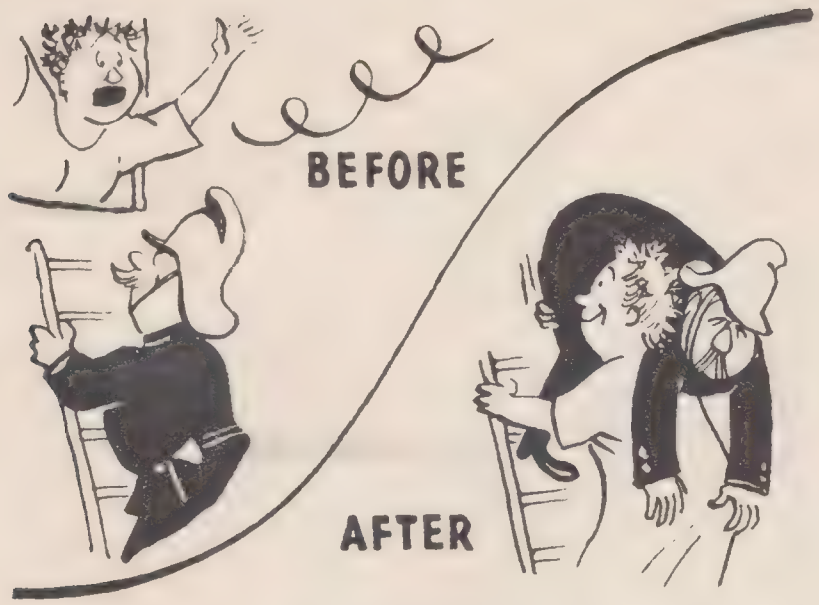
"At least you admit you understand my terms, Cronin." Rood smiled imperturbably. "Let me put it this way; if the *Lady Bella* reaches Vancouver, you're out of a job with long hard days ahead of you on the beach. Now if she don't reach port, if she happened to go ashore afire, just north of 'Frisco, there's a new ship for you. I might even throw in a cut—a bonus, let's call it, for meritorious service in saving your crew. There it is, a fair proposition, eh, Cronin?"

The muscles bunched hard under Cronin's jacket. Again he felt the almost uncontrollable impulse to throttle the man in his two hands, to silence forever that low, overweening voice. "One thing I know, Rood." Cronin's voice was harsh with loathing. "You figure on dropping off at 'Frisco yourself. You don't intend to risk that precious neck of yours, do you, Rood?"

"You're a very discerning man, Cronin." Rood's voice was edged with mockery. "But as a matter of fact, it's not to save my precious neck that I'm leaving you at 'Frisco. Got a little business there—business with an insurance underwriter. You see, Cronin, there are underwriters' agents who are willing to do business with me. We all have to make a living, you know. Some of us can't be too particular, eh, Cronin?"

"I'm particular, Rood," Cronin grated. "So particular that I think I'd need gloves before I'd throttle you. Get to your cabin, Rood. Get now or you might not have another chance!"

(*Continued on page* 34)



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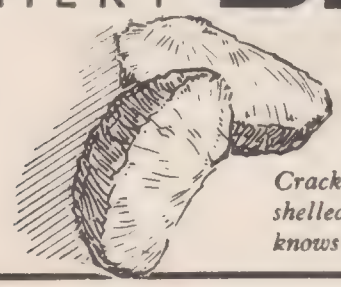

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CONTINUING

To a Lady

Rood recoiled slightly. He didn't move, but his eyes seemed to sink deeper into his skull. "You won't lay your hands on me, Cronin," he said quietly. "You wouldn't dare. And you won't blackmail me, either. I know too much about you."

Cronin's hand shot out and fastened upon the slack in Rood's jacket. He lifted him in the air, shook him mightily and dropped him in a heap upon the midship hatch. "There's your answer *now*, Rood!"

The next dawn came with no relief for his body or mind. On the bridge, he considered the brassy sun, the glassy swell of the sea. His mouth tightened; that was the only sign he gave.

Mr. Bowen, standing by the binnacle grating, caught it. "It's going to blow, sir."

Michael nodded. "'Fraid so."

The day crawled noonward. Suddenly, in a breath, the heat seemed to lift. A light wind sprang from the east, crinkling the water. The sky seemed to recede from the earth into a cold blue aloofness. A strange galvanic stillness lay over the sea.

Michael Cronin looked significantly at his chief mate. "Hurricane."

Mr. Bowen nodded. "I'd say so, sir."

"Abandon your course, Mr. Bowen, we'll need sea room. Better rouse out your crew and check hatch wedges."

All that day, the *Lady Bella* held her snub nose into the sea and wind. Hour after hour her doughty engines slugged on, hot oil laving her pistons. The seas were piling steadily higher. From the vantage of the bridge, Michael Cronin stood guard over his ship.

Night brought no lessening of the wind. Relentlessly, the black cascades of water smothered the *Lady's* foredeck, snatching at hatches, tripping wedges and tarpaulins. Despite the efforts of twenty men lashed to life lines, number three hatch began to make water.

With the added terror of darkness, Rood's last thread of courage snapped. White and sick, he crawled out of his cabin and came struggling up to the bridge clinging to the hand rail.

Cronin met him at the head of the ladder. "Below for you, Rood!"

Rood's voice was shrill. "We're foundering, Cronin! We got a list, can't you see we're foundering? You got to get help! You've got to do something!"

"In another minute, I'll be doing something, Rood. I'll be tossing you down that ladder. The *Lady Bella* doesn't need help. But I could almost hope she does break up just to take you with her. It would be a better end than you've planned for her, Rood."

"But she's not going down, is she, Cronin?" Rood whined for reassurance. "If you get her safe to port, I'll promise—I'll swear, Cronin . . ."

Cronin's mouth twisted. "I know what your promises are, Rood. If I bring her in, it won't be for you I'm doing it, you can bet your last dirty dollar on that! Now get below—and stay there!"

All through that night, her decks awash and battered, boilers leaking, pumps bucking, her thin plates strained, the *Lady* held on. She had by some curious miracle stayed afloat and fighting. Shortly after midnight the wind had dropped perceptibly. Now with dawn but a few hours off, she still pushed on, defying the conspiracy of wind and sea to hurl her on the knife-edged rocks off the Mexican coast.

Cronin gulped his black coffee and pushed out again. The worst was over. Below the tension had momentarily relaxed. The deck sounded with the weary steps of the crew crowding into the pantry for coffee. The firemen, sweat rags in their teeth, were piling up from below to fall exhausted into soiled bunks for a few moments of sleep.

Michael Cronin spoke quietly to his chief officer, "Better stow some sleep, Mr. Bowen, I'll take this watch. Have Mr. Newton called at four."

Mr. Bowen got no nearer bed than the ladder that morning. He stopped, his eyes fixed on the ragged horizon. "Ship in distress, sir."

Cronin had seen it, too. A rocket had traced its garish arc against the sky.

Michael Cronin knew a moment of wavering but so brief was his hesitance that it seemed not to have existed at all. "Adjust your course for her, Mr. Bowen. Have your blinker ready. Call Mr. Newton and Mr. Rogers. Rouse out some flares."

The *Lady* yawned and plunged as she came about. Rood was tossed violently from his bunk where he had been lying sleepless, came sputtering up the ladder, a life belt hung about his middle. Another rocket curled across the blackness as he stumbled up to Cronin. Rood saw it; whirled upon Cronin.

"You're a madman! Your own ship sinking under you and you're responding to a distress call! You're raving mad, Cronin. You can't help her. Can't you see you can't do any good!"

Michael Cronin was talking into the engine room tube. He paused to push Rood, with the flat of his palm, tumbling against the bulkhead. He picked up the tube again. "I'll give you all the men you need." He slammed the mouthpiece to its hook and pivoted on Rood. "We're going to try, Rood. If she breaks up in the attempt, it'll be the end the *Lady* deserves—a decent end. For the last time, Rood—get below! I haven't time now—even for murder!"

Mr. Bowen called from the port wing. "I can make her out, sir. About 12,000 ton—passenger and freight. She's down at the stern, slightly. She seems to be out of control—slopping badly."

Cronin stamped to the wind and commandeered the glasses. Five miles across the sea waste he saw her, a dark hulk etched against the greying eastern sky. She lay helpless in the trough of the sea, the wreckage of what once had been a sea anchor attested to her plight. Her rudder or steering gear had been disabled in the storm and she was being carried towards the coast.

In the light of the flares that studded her decks, Cronin made out forms that were the passengers huddled 'midships. On the wind-swept poop, men were working frantically constructing a new sea anchor.

Then from the bridge a white point of light spoke across the intervening sea. Mr. Bowen took the blinker message: "It's the *Beaugard*, sir—Moon Line. 'Steering gear haywire. Desperately in need of aid to hold us off the rocks until repairs can be made. Radio shack smashed by boarding seas'."

"Tell them we'll try shooting them a line down wind," Cronin commanded. "Tell them we're in bad shape ourselves and ask how long repairs will take."

The mate hesitated. "She offers a lot of freeboard to the wind. Do you think we can hold her off, sir?"

Rood's thin voice rose again. "She'll drag us on the rocks, Cronin—we'll be smashed to bits! I'll make it worth your while to leave her alone."

Then Cronin's long tried patience snapped. "I gave you fair warning, Rood," he said. He disposed of Rood with one short jab of his fist and sent him down against the bulkhead.

"Get that message off, Mr. Bowen."

They were moving in closer now. The signal of half speed clanged down in the depth of the engine room. In that wind and sea it was going to be ticklish business. One error in judgment, one hurried or one belated command would be fatal.

The *Beaugard's* blinker spoke again. The mate interpreted. "It'll take two hours more for repairs. Men stationed abaft number one hatch to take our line, sir. Quick aid imperative, they're feeling shallow water under them."

Michael Cronin didn't have to be told that. He had felt shallow water under the *Lady's* screw—that curious phenomenon that pulls down the stern of a ship close to the bottom.

"Guns ready below, Mr. Bowen?"

"Ready, sir."

Closer, still closer, the *Lady* moved in. She was riding sluggishly now, her lea rail smothered, yet despite the weight of water, despite the lack of headway, she answered her helm. More precious moments. Now beam to beam the two ships lay, both rolling dangerously.

Captain Cronin nodded. Mr. Bowen gave the signal to the gun crew below. The explosion. The line snaked out across the water. It was whipped off in the wind to fall back into the sea. Once more the gun crew, working under assaults of invading seas, sent a line curling off to the stricken ship. Again—failure.

The tube to the engine room whirred. Mr. Hobbs' voice was matter-of-fact. "The firemen will be needin' boats down here to tend the fire, skipper. We can't keep our fires much longer."

"Give 'em boats," Cronin bellowed. "Give them anything they need but give me steam. I'm going to need it now."

He turned to his chief mate. "Send the crew aft to trail a small boat, Mr. Bowen. I'm going to try to lay a line across the *Beaugard's* stern."

Mr. Bowen straightened. "That's a ticklish job," he suggested respectfully.

Michael Cronin nodded. "I know just what sort of a job it is, Mr. Bowen. In another hour we'll both be on the rocks—we're going to try it. Signal the *Beaugard* and get your men aft—lively!"

The little quartermaster planted his stout legs and set his chew as Cronin took his place beside the wheel. Ten minutes of waiting, then the call of "All Clear" from below. Cronin spoke quietly to the helmsman. "Easy now, Wildkins—steady!" The *Lady* eased about. The stern of the *Beaugard* loomed up dark and menacing. Cronin's fingers rested on the telegraph. "Steady now!"

Suddenly, Cronin jammed the telegraph. "Full speed ahead!" The *Lady*, trembling under the blast of power, lunged clear.

The moment had come. Upon those precious fathoms of line that trailed from the *Lady's* stern, two hundred eyes were fixed. Gratefully, the suspense was brief. So nice was the timing that it appeared to be utterly simple. The line folded over the *Beaugard's* stern as though there was nothing else it could have done. A throaty roar lifted from the decks of the helpless ship as the line was snared and carried aboard.

It was the work of but a few moments to haul the hawser and make them fast. Mr. Bowen, working the crew at the *Lady's* stern, waved his hand to the bridge. Captain Cronin set the telegraph. "Half speed! Full speed ahead!" The *Lady* set her battered shoulders; her engines groaned, her single screw thrashed the black water.

The *Beaugard's* helpless drift for the coastal rocks was ended.

Michael Cronin's own broad shoulders gave a little. His job was all but done. Now it was up to the *Lady*. At once an ineffable weariness gripped him. But he stood there, a grey unmoving shadow, waiting.

He knew, long before those two gruelling hours had run out that the *Lady* was going to win her fight. He knew also, as every man aboard knew, what the price was going to be. Below in the engine room they were working waist deep in oily water. From stem to stern, the *Lady's* plates were sprung. Her stern was settling, her lea rail was under. The *Lady Bella* was mortally hurt.

The deck crew was already standing silently at their lifeboat stations when signals came from the *Beaugard's* bridge. Costen lights burned—two green over red.

Mr. Bowen said: "The signal, sir. She's under way."

"Call aft to cut the cable, Mr. Bowen."

He walked to the engine room tube. "That's all, Mr. Hobbs. Abandon the engine room," he said quietly.

They were a strange, silent company standing there on the bridge of the *Beaugard*. They looked out across the morning water to where the half-submerged hulk of the *Lady Bella* lay deep in the trough of the sea.

Then the tall ruddy man spoke. "Delegated by the passengers to express our thanks, I can only say that we are deeply grateful, Captain Cronin. And in my capacity as managing director of the Moon Line, I want to say that we need men like you. We have a ship for you if you'll take it. And I'd like to pay my personal tribute to your courage and seamanship not only in aiding us but in transferring your own crew without a loss of a single life."

"A tribute, sir?" Michael Cronin's grey face turned momentarily from his vigil. "Mr. Hobbs and I would like to offer the tribute—to a *Lady*." His eyes found the *Beaugard's* master. "If I may?"

The deep silence of the morning was suddenly rent by the high shrill cry of steam as the *Beaugard's* whistle let loose. The *Lady Bella*, with no noise and little fuss, lifted her bow into the air and slipped slowly from sight into the sea.

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Electrical Encyclopedia

WONDERFUL OFFER

See page 37

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HAPPINESS
I Never Expected

AT the present time I'm a publican. As everyone knows, you need an untarnished character to obtain a licence. You do in the district where mine was issued to me, anyhow. And so, if you should chance to walk into my pleasant little country inn and see me behind the bar, well fed and contented and happy to welcome anyone, you'd probably believe I'd always been like that, born to the place and the job.

But that's where you'd be quite wrong. The looks of me are mostly the result of a happy marriage and an easy mind, but before happiness came to me, like some miracle, I was very different.

I think I'd reached rock-bottom in hopelessness. And, when I come to remember back at my state and my feelings then, I can see how natural it is, under such circumstances, that a man should sink, like an overloaded ship in stormy seas. For a man can be overloaded with trouble, while he walks about light-headed through lack of good food.

It's that light-headedness that drives a man to extremities. Empty himself, he sees the fullness of others who jostle him aside in the street, just as if he was of no account. An empty husk, they take him for, if they even trouble to think of him, they're so pleased with themselves. And that flames anger in him, so that—well, anything might happen.

I was feeling just that way about things one cold February morning, mooching along a West End street with my eyes on the pavement, for I'd long since reached the stage of picking up cigarette ends. And I picked up what looked like a good one, lying in a gutter at a corner. That was when something did happen.

It wasn't, I found, a cigarette end at all, but a bit of paper rolled up, so that it looked like one. And that bit of paper, just as I was going to throw it away again, had something about it that made me stare and change my mind. It was a ten-shilling note, if you please.

Well, a few minutes later, I was in a pub, and having some cold meat and bread and cheese and beer, all on someone else's money. It amused me so much that I told the story to a couple of men who had started to talk to me. They looked at me, I noticed, just as if I was some sort of lunatic let loose, and then one of them said:

"Why make a yarn about it? I've done well enough on other people's money for the last five years. And I was like you once, mate, getting down and out. Now I'm on clover, and so's my pal here. If you were a smart fellow, you'd take a chance the same way."

"Why, what way's that?" I asked, simple enough.

They looked at each other, and laughed as if it was a great joke. Then a girl came in, and they left me to join her. Left alone, I found the barmaid looking at me in an interested sort of way. I hadn't particularly noticed her before, but now I could see she was one of those brown-eyed rather soft sort of girls, and she certainly had a rare, sweet voice.

"You're not a friend of theirs, are you?" she asked me, with a motion towards the men and the girl at a distance. And when I shook my head, she said: "I thought not. Nice bunch of crooks they are. Best left alone."

If you'd told me then that either those men or the girl who'd told me what they were would have any effect on my life, I'd have laughed at the idea. As a matter of fact, one way and the other, I forgot all about them in the next week or so.

I got a small job, just as though that ten-shilling note had brought me luck, though it didn't last. Then another came along, but it wasn't any better than the first, and I went on short commons till I heard about a garage job in the country. To get it, I walked the whole way, and the weather was something shocking.

When I reached the place, the job was filled, and the boss there told me I was a fool, coming such a distance on chance. In fact, he as good as kicked me off his premises, saying something about not wanting suspicious-looking people round his place.

I made myself scarce, so far as that garage was concerned. But I was bitter at being treated that way, to say nothing of being suspected for what I was not. And that, I think, made me remember again those two men in that London pub, doing themselves well on other people's money. All spruced up and living on the fat of the land, while I starved. It paid, one would say, to be a crook.

Well, that idea began more and more to get the better of me as that day wore on. I was too tired to face the walk back to London right away, and too weak for lack of food. I slept in a small wood, waking up in late afternoon with hunger gnawing at me. That forced me to do something, so I begged a bite at a cottage near by, expecting the bird.

However, the woman there was kind, as poor people mostly are to the poor, and asked me in, giving me a fine hot meal. When her husband came in, he was decent too, and would have put me up for the night. But I wouldn't have that, for they were crowded out with kiddies already, though I had to accept a half-crown the woman pushed into my palm as I left.

Such human kindness, from people ill able to afford it, only made me the more bitter against those who had so much and gave away only abuse. The woman's husband had told me that, if I found an inn near by, I might get a lift on a lorry, for it was a stopping place for such. So I went to seek it through a pitch-black night and driving rain.

Instead, losing the road in the darkness, the lights ahead I thought to be the inn proved to come from the windows of a big house. One of the ground-floor windows was uncurtained and I could see into a fine room, with books round the walls like a library. I saw something else as well,

I threw the white blaze of the torch full on his face.

True Life Stories

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that made all the envy and malice in me burn like a white-hot flame.

There was a middle-aged man in the room at a writing-table. One of the swell sort that dress for dinner, even in their own homes. It seemed, too, he could afford to do that. For he had little piles of notes and silver on the table, more than I'd seen at one time for years.

He had a little three or four-year-old kiddie on his knee, and she was playing with the silver pieces, throwing them about and laughing, some of them rolling off to the floor. And there was I, peering in out of the dark and rain, with only half-a-crown in the world, and that the charity of the poor!

While I watched, a woman-servant came in and took the child away, when the man had kissed it. The man collected up the notes and silver after a minute or two, having seemed to check them by a list he had, and put the lot into a little leather case, which he locked and set on a sort of cabinet in a corner. Then, as if he'd noticed for the first time that the curtains hadn't been drawn, he came straight towards them.

Naturally, not to be seen by him, I'd stepped back into the darkness among some bushes. But, when he'd drawn the curtains, I said to myself that it was like locking the stable door after the mare had been stolen. And that last word became big in my mind, the one thing to which I'd never turned my hand yet, but intended to do to-night. For I'd taken note that the top of the window had been left open, so one could get into that room easily enough from outside where I was.

But not till much later, of course, when everyone in the house was asleep. There was a little wooden arbour only a few paces from where I'd been standing, and I made for that. It kept me dry, and even a little warm, during that long wait. How long it was I never quite knew. For, [redacted]ave dropped [redacted]f all I would do with that money, once I had my hands on it.

And now, waking up, all stiff and cramped, I kept very still. For someone in the darkness was moving about and talking in whispers to someone else.

"She's left the window open all right!" said one whisper.

"Good. Then I'll get back to the car, ready to start off when you come along with our little bit of profit."

I heard footsteps making off, very quiet, and whoever remained still near me began to move towards the window. I could see little flashes of light, as he flicked the rays of a torch round very carefully. Then he seemed—from what I could hear—to have climbed to the sill and begun opening the window.

Well, all this was a nasty blow to me, as you can guess. Here was I, waiting to get my hand on all that lovely money in there, looking on while other people took it away under my very eyes. Not if I could help it, I told myself, keeping very still and waiting.

If I couldn't see anything, I could hear, for instance, the bottom of the window going up and the man clambering in. I heard, too, something drop on the ground outside, and he cursed a little under his breath. Then it seemed that he'd gone on into the room.

I don't know what made me grope about under the window for what had been dropped, but I did. And, soon as my fingers touched it, I knew it was the electric torch he'd been flashing. I had to laugh to myself, thinking how handy it would be when that chap clambered out again, with the money he was no doubt after, and I blinded him with the light while I downed him and snatched the money from him.

For that was the desperate idea I had in my mind, while I waited there in the dark, listening hard for sounds telling me that he was coming back. I hadn't to wait long, either. I heard the soft pad-pad of his feet over the floor inside, and then whispers. I guessed he was talking to his accomplice inside, remembering the remark that "she" had left the window open. A moment later I heard him clamber over the sill and drop gently to the ground below.

Before he'd taken half a dozen steps, I had the white blaze of the torch full on his face, completely taking him aback and blinding him. But I was even more taken aback, though far from blinded. I could see only too well, looking for that case of money I expected him to be carrying. Nothing of the sort, believe me, though I could scarcely trust my own eyes as they stared and stared.

And then I gave a yell, loud enough to waken the whole countryside. For in that man's arms, all wrapped up warm and fast asleep, was that little three or four-year-old kiddie I'd seen playing with that money on what proved to be her father's knee, earlier on!

"Help! Help! Kidnappers!" I started to bellow, and flung myself at the man, not so much thinking of the kid as to sock him one. I suppose he must have dropped the kid, for I heard it begin to cry. And by then I'd got the kidnapper by the throat, while lights in the house had been switched on and people were at windows, shouting down.

How I managed to knock that kidnapper out, in my weak condition, I don't know now. Anyway, he was a flop on the ground when people came running to find out all about it. And of course, when the father of the kid realised what it meant, I had to explain my part in it, which wasn't too easy, especially when the police came along.

I learnt then that, so far as the kidnapping was concerned, it had been planned by these men, with the nurse's help, for the divorced wife of the kid's father. If I hadn't chanced there to interfere, that kid would have been out of the country in no time and lost to him.

Anyhow, if anyone gained by the business it was I, more ways than one. The kid's father was in the brewing industry, and that's how I now have a pub, taking other people's money, it's true, but all fair and square.

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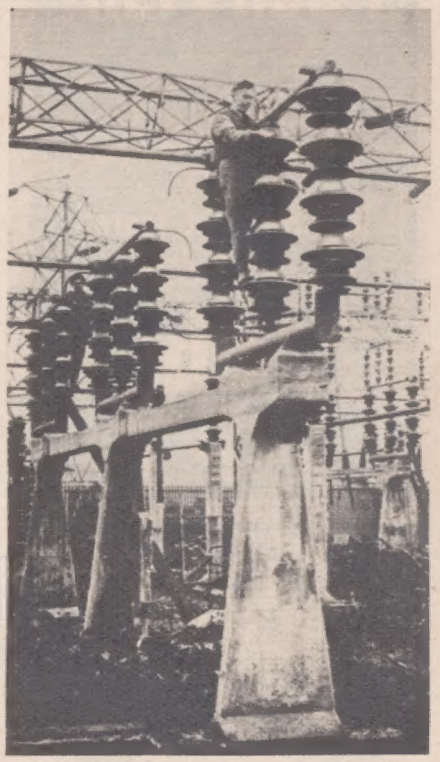

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Just sign and post the form below and on acceptance we will send you these four volumes, carriage paid, to examine for one week free. You may either return them at our expense within 8 days, to end the matter, or you may keep them on the very easy terms outlined on the form.

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Please send me, carriage paid, for seven days' FREE Examination, "THE ELECTRICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA," complete in four volumes. It is understood that I may return the work on the eighth day after I receive it and that there the matter ends. If I decide to keep the books I will send you on the eighth day a First Payment of 2/6, and, beginning thirty days after, thirteen further monthly payments of 5/- each and a final one of 6/-, thus completing the purchase price.

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They've never tasted "Walters' Palm" Toffee

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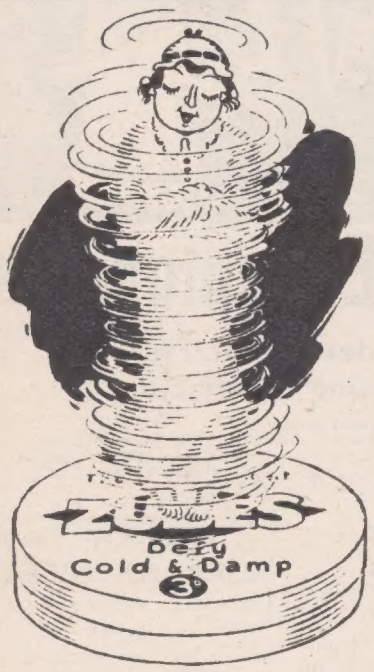

Go on sleeping like a top—
Zubes make throaty tickling stop.

Go — suck a

ZUBE

Zubes contain Aniseed, Liquorice, Menthol, Friar's Balsam and other tried and homely remedies that are 'best for throat and chest.'

In flat tins 3d. and 6d.

2½d. per ounce loose.

NINE YEARS OF STOMACH TROUBLE

"Can eat and drink anything now"

For nine long years, Mr. Harry White, of Widcombe, Bath, suffered the agony and torture of stomach trouble. For nine years he searched for a cure in vain. Yet only a trial course of Maclean Brand Stomach Powder made him so much better that he feels as though he is "in heaven!" Read his amazing letter:—

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Such an experience as this must convince you that Maclean Brand can bring you the relief you long for. Get a bottle to-day, but refuse to have anything to do with cheap substitutes for the "signature" brand which have arisen through its wonderful record. Ask for Maclean Brand Stomach Powder and see that the signature "ALEX. C. MACLEAN" is on the bottle and carton. Never sold loose. 1/3, 2/- and 5/-.

You're Telling Us!

What is more grating, discordant and altogether unpleasant?

SERVICE

on motoring, travel, holidays, dress, finance, home, education, and every other practical subject is given free by "The Passing Show" Advice Service, 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2. Enclose stamped envelope with query.

Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 31 Bow Street, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs. or Miss.

LONDON IS A VAST, unsociable place, in spite of crowds and bright lights one of the loneliest spots in the world. But it is not only London. According to Captain Westmacott—who writes to us from a hotel in Cromwell Road, London—Leeds, Bournemouth, and Harrogate are just the same. In the last nine weeks he has tried them all. "I happened to be born in Leeds," states the Cap., "but I was taken as a baby by my parents to British Columbia, where I have lived for the greater part of my life. Most of us have an itch to get back sometime, and I made the trip—and it is a tidy long one—nearly three months ago. Sometimes I wish I had not gone to the expense and trouble.

THERE ARE LOTS OF THINGS an old fellow like me would like to talk over with people here. You get no chance in the Old Country. It seems to me that it isn't done, and I must say I have felt much more lost in the whirl when I was thirty miles from a human habitation back home, with only my dog to talk to, in some of our forests. I expect you already know that quite a lot of folk read your paper where I come from. I do myself, and I have seen letters from Canada, including one from a man in the next town to where I live. Well, since I might as well be a cardsharper from the way Londoners welcome me, I am writing to you to get something that has struck me pretty forcibly, off my chest.

THE OLD COUNTRY TO-DAY shows how true it is that what you take for granted you cannot enjoy. You have to live in a country where water is a precious thing to appreciate what a drink of water tastes like. In London there is so much to do, so many people to telephone, talk, and write to, so much rush and botheration, that you people do not appreciate what contact with your fellow humans can mean. In London you try to dodge it. You cannot telephone a man without having to speak to someone else first so that he has a chance of dodging talking. Let me tell you about a dying man who came to our timber country for a last look round. He was in the last stages of tuberculosis, but by some miracle of sleeping close to the ground and lying rough in the open, not caring whether he lived or died, he did not die, and is still alive to-day. His health is terrible still, but he is the happiest man I know. Why? Because he appreciates the fact of being alive. I think your Uncle Joe would speak to a fellow, whether he knew him or not, and I surely would like to meet him."

LET US SAY for the Sage of St. Ives that he would like to meet you too, Cap. "Come down and hear me sometime" is his motto. "Alarm clocks, like teeth," writes that brother of ours, Paul, "are the concern of everyone. There is a great future for the alarm I have invented. Civilisation began when the alarm clock came in, and we have to have them to keep in step with modern times. Yet, what is more grating, discordant, and altogether unpleasant than the racket your alarm sets up to drag you from your warm bed to face another day? The old fashioned alarm clock (now happily out of date through my clever invention) shouts and screams at you. There are no bells in my clock. At the specified hour in the morning harp strings are plucked softly by rubber pads, giving a soothing musical note. The tune played is guaranteed not to disturb the lightest sleeper, thereby avoiding unnecessary shock to the system and the unpleasantness of having to get up."

IF YOU DO NOT BELIEVE," writes Miss Mary Hopwood, of Witton, Birmingham, "that, while a woman's whole life is wrapped up in her man, a man's life is mostly his work and other 'interests,' consider how men in various walks of life think of their womenfolk. Who would term a pretty girl a 'trim little craft'?" Not us, for one, if she were within earshot. "Why, a sailor," explains Miss Hopwood. "A gardener will think of his girl as a flower; a soldier thinks of his 'trusty'; an engineer would say his girl was 'true as steel.' All this proves that when a man thinks a lot of a woman he pays her the compliment of comparing her with something that really matters—his work! To a woman her man is just a man. If you do not know a man's trade, ask him to tell you about his wife. He will betray that trade in a couple of minutes."

IT SOUNDS A TRIFLE complicated: how would this business work out if we sounded the old friend we see most mornings on the street corner here? How would *he* refer to his wife? He breeds dogs for a living. "I wish you could tell me," writes L. H., of Shining Sheffield, "what it is that makes us gamble. Money is hard enough to come by, yet think of the thousands—millions would be nearer—who waste it in this country through the gambling fever. I'm not preaching at you, Mr. Ed. I have been a gambler for more than forty years, and I have lost all the time. What makes me do it I do not know. I am always saying well that is the last time, my boy. But I have my bob ready next time, all the same. I know I can't win in the end. So why is it?"

JUDGING BY HIS FACE, eating gives Allergic Alfred, our office boy, indigestion, but he goes on eating just the same. Quite a lot of folk write to us thinking highly of us, but we publish the insults just to show we have no pride. "If there were a woman among you," writes Mother-of-Three, of Aberdeen, "all the rest of us mothers and wives would not be made light of so easily in *You're Telling Us*! Let me tell you that you are an old woman yourself, and that you would run quick enough out of my kitchen if I got hold of my broom handle. Do you ever think of your women readers?"

YES. AND, ACCORDING to Miss Hopwood's ruling above, as a journalist we think of you all, dear ladies, as our own sweet, four-bank, shift-locking little typewriters.

ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

MISHAP AT HOME

SCORES of times she had stepped on a chair to light the gas. But once the unexpected happened—she overbalanced and fell, fracturing a rib.

Fortunately she had signed the simple forms for "The Passing Show's" Great Free Family Insurance Gift, and promptly received a substantial cheque as Home Accident Benefit.

"The Passing Show" offers Benefits for fatal or non-fatal accidents, while special provision is made for Children's Accidents and widows. No fewer than 37 generous Benefits are provided in all.

Forms are on page 35.

Words After the Letters

CLUES DOWN

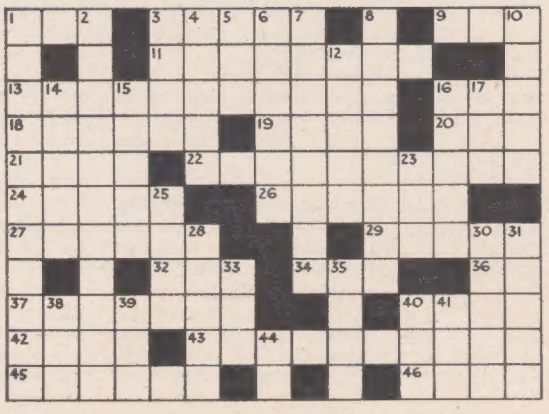
1. That which may be accomplished.
2. One guided by reason.
3. 2 we presume is this.
4. Words but not verses.
5. A coat of armour to encase a limb.
6. Short jacket.
7. Tea-times for reckoning.
8. Unruffled calmness.
10. Colour of a blush.
12. Doctrinal belief.
14. An ancient dame.
15. May be sea-girt.
16. A little internal change makes a bird of 14.
17. Musical or atmospheric.
23. Yes this is Devon.
25. Something paid or to pay.
28. And these are paid out.
30. Means upset.
31. L before these and sometimes after.
33. Three-fifths of 12.
35. Possibly a new one turned over.
38. Hasten.
39. The Queen of Sheba will give you this.
40. Electrical unit (abbreviation).
41. Archaic affirmative.
44. Active part of 28.

D	I	L	A	P	I	D	A	T	I	O	N	■	D	■
I	■	E	■	N	■	A	■	I	■	N	■	C	R	E
R	O	G	A	T	I	O	N	■	O	A	S	E	S	■
E	D	E	N	■	T	R	U	A	N	T	S	■	S	■
■	E	R	I	C	■	I	L	L	■	E	■	P	E	T
A	■	D	A	U	N	T	■	L	A	■	E	R	N	E
C	R	E	S	T	■	E	L	U	C	I	D	A	T	E
C	A	M	■	F	■	A	R	C	■	I	T	E	M	■
R	I	A	L	T	O	■	R	E	E	N	T	E	R	S
U	N	I	T	■	C	■	V	■	D	O	O	R	■	■
E	■	N	A	V	I	G	A	T	E	■	R	S	V	P

Solution to last week's puzzle.

CLUES ACROSS

1. Only half the person here.
2. A broken spear for something over.
9. Northwards maybe, but not in the south.
11. Seized.
13. Remit one cat (anagram).
16. A low fellow.
18. Being in midst of serious events.
19. One who is 11 may get off with this.
20. Taken for a ride (hidden).
21. This implement in retrospect suggests burglarious intentions.
22. Nearly meet (anagram).
24. Not out comparatively.
26. Allowance.
27. Finished with comfort at heart.
29. Something for nothing perhaps.
32. Only a half notion.
34. Solely conceals a cathedral city.
36. This cannot be you.
37. A hair of a swine.
40. They sometimes have it.
42. Some meadows may be so.
43. Here's affection.
45. Penetrates.



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The Shadforth list of Special Soaps includes :—

No. 929. Anti-Wrinkle (Benzoin) Soap—smooths out the furrows—gives a fresh, youthful appearance **1/-**

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No. 940. Anti-Body-Odour (Formalin) Soap—quickly removes unpleasant body odours—a joy to those who perspire freely, also used for softening corns **1/-**

No. 986. Anti-Obesity (Ox-Gall) Soap. Dissolves surface fat and gives a dry, non-oily skin—a boon to the corpulent **1/3**

No. 1064. Anti-Blackhead or Acne, Pimple and Skin-rash-clearing (Milk of Sulphur Soap) **1/3**

He eats anything now and both are happy — thanks to "WHITE LIONS."

PAIN AFTER EATING

Acidity, Heartburn, Sour Stomach, Fermentative Dyspepsia, Gastric Catarrh, Wind or Flatulence, Fullness after Meals, and all forms of Acid Indigestion have disappeared like magic.

"WHITE LIONS" give prompt relief and comfort. Even Gastric and Duodenal Ulcers yield to this treatment. This prescription is not purgative. **Prices 1/4** (72), **2/6** (144), **7/-** (432 Lions). They give prompt relief and comfort. (No. 1077)

Make your mealtimes happier! A trial will convince you that **"White Lions"** are **POSITIVELY the World's Greatest Remedy for Indigestion**

"How to Cure Indigestion" Booklet (P.S.314) free on request.

With the Aid of SHADFORTH'S MALTED NERVE COCOA

Above all, **Shadforth's Cocoa** is a really first-rate beverage that you can **Enjoy.** It explodes once and for all the widely-held impression that health beverage must necessarily be sickly and without real **Flavour. Shadforth's Cocoa** contains Lecithin, Phosphorus and Casein, which make it a practically perfect food both for children and adults. It is extraordinarily rich in nourishment. You may drink it with every meal if you wish—its appetising and delightful tonic flavour is such that you will never tire of it—**but it is especially good taken last thing every night. It ensures sound, healthy, refreshing sleep, soothes the nerves, and builds up vitality.**

BUILDS UP BRAIN, NERVE, AND BODY—AND YOU CAN'T HELP LIKING IT!

Prices 2/6 and 4/6. (No. 39c)

In addition, sleepless souls are recommended by doctors to take a Hop Compound Pill and lay their heads on a hop pillow. The pills are supplied at **2/6** *and* **4/6** *(Shadforth Prescription No. 32) and the pillow at* **10/6** *(No. S129).*

ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN

When the days drag, when you know that your vitality is low and life is wearisome—take "Brain Sparklers." They cannot do you any harm, and they will positively revivify the bodily organism and set you free from the fear of mind and body through jaded, worn-out nerves. Every woman would benefit from a course of Shadforth Brand

"BRAIN SPARKLERS"

There is nothing like them. They are not a "patent medicine." They are what your Doctor would advise. But what a difference they make! In place of lassitude—pulsating life. In place of depression—bright, buoyant spirits. In place of despondency and despair—a new, fresh outlook that will mean everything to you.

EQUALLY GOOD FOR MEN

And all for a few shillings. Ask for **Shadforth's Prescription No. 470** ("Brain Sparklers"). Prices: **1/9** (25). **3/3** (50), **6/-** (100).

Can be taken alternately with the Heart Tonic (No. 632). That is to say, take No. 470 for a few days and then No. 632 for a few days, and so on. See No. 632 above.

Special Book on Nerve Troubles (No. P.S.323) free on request.

HEART TROUBLE

Prescription that always brings relief

HEART DISEASE IS RARE. Don't be alarmed because you suffer from palpitation or pain near the heart. It may be caused by indigestion or overstrung nerves. **Shadforth Tonic No. 632** (known as "Blue Lion Fox Nuts") will strengthen the nerves, steady the heart, and tone up stomach and kidneys. Don't imagine yourself into an illness; have a good rest, take the prescription, and be normal in a few days. Prices: **2/6** (72), **4/6** (144), **13/-** (432 pills).

This prescription prevents palpitation, faintness, heart failure, tremblings, run-down condition, and stops that falling-to-pieces feeling.

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SKIN & COMPLEXION TROUBLES

The Shadforth Beauty Course for the Girl with Moderate Means

comprises a special medicated Sulphur Soap, a Complexion Tonic Lotion for use after washing, and the famous "Shadforth" Complexion Tonic Prescription in dainty tablet form.

This constitutes the world's best triplex beauty treatment, and is supplied with full directions. It removes Acne or Blackheads, Pimples, Redness, Blemishes, and Sallow Complexion. The Beauty Parlour price of similar treatment runs from 2 to 5 guineas. Ask for **Shadforth Beauty Course (No. 442/T).** Prices: **3/9** and **6/-.**

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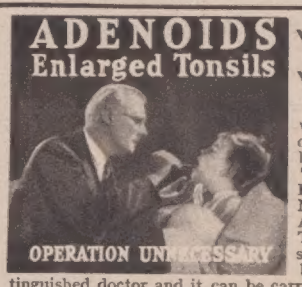
BLADDER COMFORT

No More Disturbed Nights

Liver, Kidney, and Bladder trouble, such as Cystitis, Prostatitis, Stricture, Incontinence, Constipation, Gall Stones, with associated Gout, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Backache, Gravel, Scalding, and constant getting up at nights are quickly relieved by the bloodless surgery of **"Shadforters" (Shadforth Brand Bladder Comforters).** Immediately, all day and all night, painlessly, secretly, and without the loss of one drop of blood or one hour of employment, they get to work. They cleanse, cool, and heal. They move what is harmful. You are restored. Don't worry. Shadforth will give you prompt relief. Prices: **2/6** (50), **4/6** (100), **13/-** (300). Prescription No. 285.

How to Treat Kidney Troubles Booklet (P.S.254) free on request.



YOU CAN CURE YOUR CHILD

without the surgeon's knife or the loss of one drop of blood by means of the **"SHADFORTH" KNIFELESS TREATMENT FOR ADENOIDS AND ENLARGED TONSILS.** This most successful treatment has been drawn up by a distinguished doctor and it can be carried out easily at home, and in any part of the world. It is claimed to be one of the most recent advances of medical treatment; it has saved hundreds of operations, and costs only **7/6,** with full directions. Ask for the **"Shadforth" Treatment for Enlarged Tonsils and Adenoids (No. 331/TAD). Septic Tonsils and Nasal Obstruction in Adults** are also conquered without operation, pain, or loss of blood.

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(3) A Special Fat Reducing Massage Cream. (Price **2/6** and **4/6** per jar.)
(4) A Special Ox-Gall Soap for removing the fat from the skin. (Price **1/3** per tablet.)

This simultaneous fourfold attack is remarkably successful. The complete fourfold treatment, with directions, costs **7/9** (2 weeks' treatment), and **14/6** (4 weeks' treatment). Each item is supplied separately if desired.

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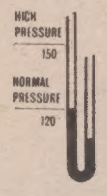
A Spoonful a Day Keeps the Doctor Away. The best morning saline for Biliousness, Constipation, Disordered Stomach, Sluggish Liver, Bladder and Kidney Troubles, Gout, Rheumatism, Feverishness, Obesity, etc. Drink it **first thing every morning.** Tasteless with your tea. **For Sparkling Eyes, Clear Complexion, Tip-top Fitness, and Joie de Vivre.** Prices, post free, in airtight canisters: **3d., 6d.,** and **1/-. Prescription 565K**

HOW TO AVOID A STROKE

SPECIALIST SAYS: Keep your Arteries Young, your Blood Pressure Down, and Add Years to your Life.



High Blood Pressure means High Risks! Here is a Treatment which will lower it, say 10 or more points a month, and **KEEP** it reasonably low. Blood Pressure Breakdowns are absolutely unnecessary and Arterio-Sclerosis is curable. Steady heart action, co-ordinated with youth-like elastic arteries, are now possible for those past their prime. The **"Shadforth" Simple Home Treatment for Arterio-Sclerosis** rapidly reduces high blood pressure and tension. It gives prompt relief from palpitation, giddiness, premonition of collapse, and sleeplessness; it leads to permanent restoration and makes you 20 years younger—within 20 days. **GET IT NOW. Prescription No. 1108/T. Prices: 2/6, 5/6, 15/6.**

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ACUTE GOUT, SWOLLEN JOINTS

For all Uric Acid-Troubles, including Rheumatic Gout, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Swollen Joint and Acute Gout, world-famed remedy is found in the **"SHADFORTH" THREEFOLD TREATMENT (No. 74/T).** It promptly reduces swelling and inflammation; it allays pain and expels uric acid; it kills bacteria in the blood and makes movement a pleasure. The treatment is second to none for Acute Gout. Supplied with full directions at **2/6** and **5/6 (No. 74/T.)**

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SHADFORTH PRESCRIPTION SERVICE Ltd., (Dept. P.S. 104) 49, KING WILLIAM STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 and Branches

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